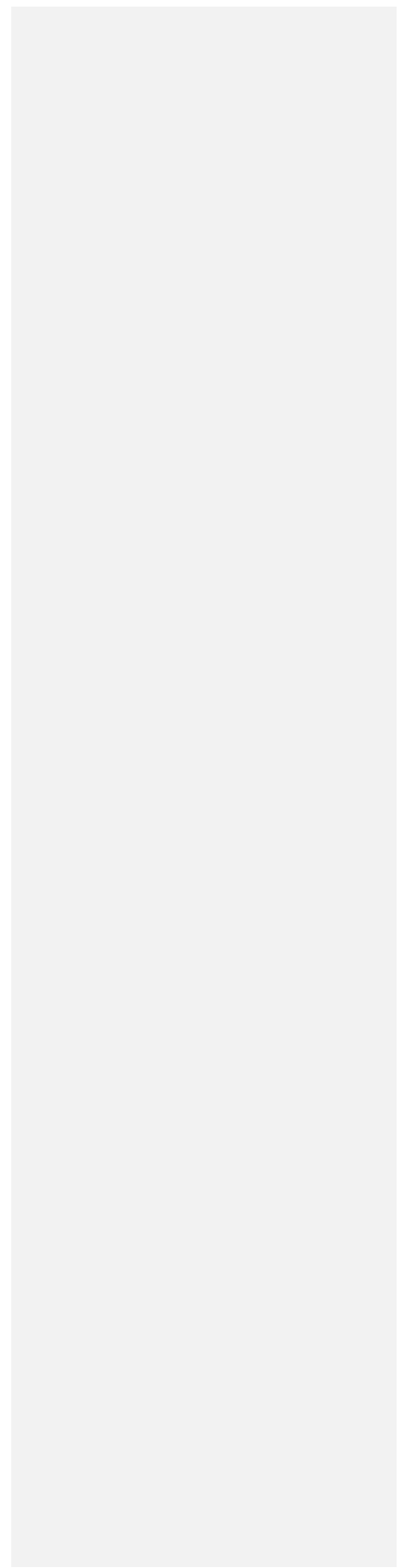


The Heretic

by

Robert James Lees



AN APPRECIATION

*As ever this first to My Beloved
If every wife were like to thee
Earth might the Life Elysian be
And Paradise be Heaven.
Alas for Earth, this is not so
God's angels rarely come. They go.
To me His best was given.*

R. J. LEES.



1850—1912

1849—1931

ELINOR AND ERNEST PAWLEY, 1880



MR. AND MRS. ROBERT JAMES LEES, 1912

FOREWORD

As my father did not write an Introduction to the First Edition of *The Heretic*, neither do I wish to do more than explain why it is being re-published as a Double Centenary Edition: after being out of print for so many years. I will include what he himself wrote about it, as given in "My Books - How they were written," which MSS was found after his Transition in 1931, and then published.

Since the Centenary edition of "The Gate of Heaven" was brought out in 1949, I have been overwhelmed with enquiries for this book, and so it is brought out as a double Centenary Edition to the memory of both my parents. Father 1849-1931, Mother 1850-1912, because it was not made known that they were Mr. and Mrs. Pawley, but taken for granted the reader would grasp the fact as obvious.

Now that the Author is known the world over by his classic Trilogy, I think it will be well for my Mother to be fully appreciated in the part she took, and through her Courage, Faith and Suffering, helped my Father to accomplish in part some of the work the Ministering Angels came back to our Earth to do and show - There is no Death.

The Heretic covers the period 1875-95 only. Later it may be possible to also bridge 1895-1931 in isolated detail.

This 2nd edition is therefore Sacredly and Lovingly Dedicated as a Double Centenary Memorial to both my parents known within these covers as:

ERNEST AND ELINOR PAWLEY

EVA LEES.

May 17th 1950

*Rodona,
54, Fosse Road, South.
Leicester.*

The Heretic was unexpectedly called for by the continual stream of correspondence which ensued, asking whether the Recorder's note was to be taken literally - by what process of development I had arrived at the possibility of a visible and tangible communion. Myhanene was quick to read between the lines of these enquiries, and would only allow a brief reply saying that the whole scheme of such development should be explained in a volume which was in course of preparation. This question of development was not one of sitting alone or with a carefully selected company regularly at a certain hour and for a given time. To whoever would answer the call to such a service it meant a life surrendered to the duty and responsibilities laid upon it; and Myhanene would have any who would aspire to wear the laurel of such a service first sit down and contemplate something of the price which would have to be paid, the battle to be fought, and the nature of the crucible by which the necessary refining would need to be secured. These are some of the phases of initiation through which the development passed, the detailed record of which may be read in *The Heretic*. I am neither vaunting myself nor complaining, but simply stating plain facts.

As the results of my long training have been unique and inviting, so the way by which my friends have sympathetically led me have been far away from the highway of usual mediumistic experiences, and if it had not been for the heights of the visions I have enjoyed on the mountain tops, I should never have had the courage to face the shadows of the valley. The picture painted may be a sombre one - too much so I have ventured to suggest - while the highlights of success have been correspondingly toned down. But the slight service I have been enabled to render has been somewhat helpful to the angels of God, and knowing all I now know, I would gladly go through it all again to secure even a tithe of the results which have been attained.

Chapter I - The Doctor And The Sacrament

Twenty years ago there stood in a little court on the east side of Aldersgate Street, by courtesy called a square, a comfortable boarding-house known as Shaftesbury Hall; or, rather, such was the name of a large room forming part of the house occasionally requisitioned by the Y.M.C.A. on the other side of the street and other religious and philanthropic societies.

The hostess of this establishment was Miss Prout, one of those half-angel, half-womanly creatures, generally regarded as belonging to the 'good old days' - not because the race has died out but rather that we refuse to recognise them in their capacity of ministering angels until we lose them. When the niche is empty we are speedily able to estimate the value of the loss, and the abiding vacancy becomes consecrated as the shrine of our regret. Miss Prout has long since gone to her reward, but she is not forgotten, and there are souls engaged in the great struggle of London life to-day who sometimes pause and breathe a thought of prayer and benediction as her name recurs. But what are these to the many who had gone before and would await to join in the abundant entrance she would receive at the golden gate and cry 'Amen' to the welcome of her Lord, who acknowledged 'Ye did it unto Me?'

Her life was like a perennial spring of heavenly waters rising out of the secret sympathy of her supersensitive heart, overflowing the cup of existence with ceaseless volume, and converting one spot in the great Sahara of London into an oasis of welcome rest and repose for many a dispirited traveller. Dear reflection of her much-loved Master, the perfume of her memory comes like sweet fragrance across the intervening years, causing our hearts to tremble and our eyes to fill as we lay this simple tribute upon her sacred bier.

It was a glorious Sunday in the early spring. The dinner had just finished, a fact of which the motherly hostess very carefully assured herself before pushing back her old-fashioned armchair and saying, 'Gentlemen, I will not detain you.' At this regular form of dismissal 'the family' - some scarcely out of their teens, and others rapidly approaching the snow-line of life - rose and hurried away, some to get a customary Sunday doze, others for a stroll, and three - who will claim our attention - retired to one of the cosy sitting-rooms for a pre-arranged chat.

Charles Tressey was a precise, aesthetic and softly-spoken man of the barometer order, automatically adjusting himself to existing circumstances, and mechanically content to indicate rather than give expression to any kind of disturbance. Being alike void of energy, animation or aspiration, his sense of life was strictly regulated by the surrounding atmosphere of the moment. He was one of the permanent boarders at Shaftesbury Hall, having been left with Miss Prout by a friend on the day

he 'fell into' a clerkship in a neighbouring commercial house some twenty years previously, at which time his mechanism had apparently been adjusted to perform the exact amount of systematic duties his engagement stipulated, then take him home, and occasionally as far as Exeter Hall. He was a fair specimen of one class of London clerk - a decently-dressed, walking, aimless automaton, without a doubt or trouble or disturbance caused by any intellectual idea.

It is a magnificent illustration of the generous and far-reaching benevolence and almost hopeless industry of nature that - according to the assurances of Miss Prout - there was once a determined effort to arouse a tender feeling in Tressey, with a view of making something of a man of him; but the consequent generation of energy produced such alarming symptoms that the attempt was immediately abandoned. Of course Tressey sweetly and softly denied the impeachment, but there was just a vein of tenderness in his composition which gave a certain colour to Miss Prout's declaration.

On such occasions as the present two special easy-chairs were requisite for his complete comfort; in the smaller and lower of these, after carefully shaking, he arranges the most downy of down cushions of pale blue satin, and lace fringed, and taking his seat in the opposite chair tenderly confides to the dainty bosom of the cushion a pair of somewhat undersized feet, delicately encased in patent leather slippers of Parisian Manufacture. In Tressey's opinion - and this was perhaps the only opinion he ever possessed - these twin pets of his for beauty, proportion and *petite* perfection had seldom been equalled but never surpassed and all the affection of his nature was lavished upon them.

Being satisfied that his feet were as suitably provided for as circumstances would permit, he next gave what attention remained to the final touches of his own comfort; then, tenderly linking his fingers across his chest, would arrange his smile, close his eyes, and prepare to listen to his companions. As a rule he did not attempt to take a great share in any conversation, so as to avoid wearying himself, still he was fond of hearing others, and always ready to ask a question or try and turn a subject if necessary. But his favourite habit was to listen, expressing agreement by almost imperceptible nods and smiles, or the contrary by equally delicate suggestions of frowns or contractions of the brow; but should he hear anything usually surprising he would go so far as to open his eyes, and turn a mild, interrogatory glance upon the speaker before he again sank back into repose.

Frederick Reynolds Gradeley was the senior of Tressey by twenty years, and at once so diverse in temperament as to inspire a wonder where any sympathy could be found between them. Tall, spare and angular in body, with grizzly grey magnetic hair and beard defying either order or arrangement, restless, piercing eyes, a mercurial habit of speech, and a mind full of illusory ideals, in following which he had wrecked what might otherwise have been a brilliant career, he was a man to attract attention,

and, when the somewhat unpleasant effect of his peculiarities had been overcome, possessed a certain charm by reason of his keen intellectual qualities and unusually wide experiences. In early life, having secured a wranglership and medal at Cambridge, his first idea was to adopt the law but his choice was repented of almost before he had eaten his dinners, and he turned his attention to the much more suitable vocation of art. In this his genius was certainly at home, and under the direction his enthusiastic patron, David Cox, an undoubtedly promising career was opening before him, when he conceived a desire to travel. Away went brushes and colours, and in the galleries of continental cities years of valuable time were squandered to no practical purpose beyond an occasional article which aroused considerable attention by his clear insight and technical art criticism. Here another splendid opportunity was afforded him, but his erratic mind refused to entertain any suggestion of systematic engagement and another vision of possibility gradually faded away. Presently the unavoidable claims of an increasing family insisted on an acknowledgment, and his more congenial studies - simply from his impracticable carelessness - had to be abandoned for the repugnant drudgery of a pedagogue's - to him - soul-harrowing torture. Still, with his deeply-rooted aversion to this new sphere of labour - and it was indeed labour - he proved to be in no sense a failure, but rather achieved such success that his friends had well-founded hopes of seeing him step into the headmaster's chair of the important grammar school of Brassington. But Gradeley's restless soul again took flight, and his next attempt was to bury himself in antiquarian lore, where he hoped to make a name by the decipherment of ancient MSS. and tablets. So the episodes of his life continued to vary; always hoping, yet always failing from simple lack of continuity and perseverance, until when we meet with him he was in London in pursuance of a commission to secure a collection of paintings, including a gallery of 'family portraits,' if possible reaching back to the Plantagenets, for a brand-new Yankee millionaire.

The third member of this somewhat ill-assorted trio - Ernest Pawley - is again strangely different both by disposition and fortune to either of his companions. His life had not been either so prodigal of opportunities as in the case of Gradeley, nor so placidly colourless as Tressey had found it. Still, as more than ten years the junior of the younger man, and such a period holds many possibilities in an active and studious career. To the curse of drink he owed a heritage of misfortune, which compelled him at the immature age of six - when he was just beginning to play with the alphabet - to turn his back on school, and bring his mite of eighteenpence a week for calling 'shop,' as a needed contribution to his mother's slender purse.

There are, however - if we could only take the comfort such certainty is designed to give - unseen hands employed in weaving heaven's eternal tapestries from the threads of life's misfortunes, and young Pawley was not left to wander all alone. He had a natural trend of thought and disposition from an ancestry of Nonconformist

ministers reaching in an unbroken line from beyond the Act of Uniformity to his own father, and there was not a little of the fiery zeal of Cromwell's independents smouldering in himself. Such a foundation was not bad to build upon and outlined the ground plan of a character he might very advantageously develop - a fact he discovered and did not fail to profit by. Painfully conscious that his self-directed education was neither systematic nor strictly utilitarian, he did his best with the opportunities at his disposal, and was presently rewarded by finding himself an accepted candidate for a training college, through which he hoped to redeem the promise to his old grandfather and enter the ministry.

Such success was undoubtedly due in a great measure to the lady who afterwards became his wife, who, sympathising with his desire, gave him many valuable hints, but perhaps served him even better as a careful and kindly critic of his preaching at that time.

But here Pawley's plans did not appear to receive a Divine approval, for while waiting the commencement of his collegiate term he caught cold, and had the sad disappointment to hear the assurance of a specialist that he would never be able to preach again. It was a heavy blow, but he met it with commendable resignation, and doing his best to hide his sorrow turned his attention again to secular pursuits.

He married, and gained no little consolation from his wife's ardent encouragement to continue his studies in the hope that even his doctor's opinion might prove to be mistaken. Five years he fought and hoped and toiled, but though he most assiduously cultivated his mind and laboured indefatigably to widen the horizon of his intellect, the signs of his weakness showed but little hope of improvement. Still he pressed forward, waited and prayed in faith. He read as widely as time and the free libraries would permit, but had no chance of gathering even a modest library of his own. But he had one book and that was always more than all others to him, since it was and must remain the text-book and source from which all true Christian prophecy and exhortation could be drawn. And in the study of the Bible he was gradually led to make a somewhat curious division of its authority. The New was to be infinitely preferred before the Old Testament, and the Gospels were so much greater than the Epistles; and when he had gone so far in his classification he even made a choice and distinction in the parts of the Gospels, by insisting on the paramount authority of the words of Jesus over all and everything outside.

'In descriptions and narratives,' he would say in defence of his method, 'we are naturally liable to have an unconscious colouring and bias of other minds, but in the simple words of the Master we hear the true music of His Gospel.'

This practice of interpreting and bringing other parts of the Bible - and in fact all he read - to the standard of the words of Jesus at once began to show itself in certain changes of ideas and new renderings of the great message. And when - almost when

he had ceased to hope for it - he was permitted to give a careful trial to his voice, his simple reading of the lesson gave such a new tone and interpretation to the book as to call for notice and inquiry as to its underlying reason. Some of his hearers went so far as to assert that 'he must have a special Bible to suit himself,' and others, who followed his reading and knew such an idea to be unfounded, were at a loss to understand how simple emphasis alone could give the Bible such an unfamiliar sound and fill it with such strange - yet natural and unquestionable interpretation. In his discourses he sometimes carried the simple inference of his reading to such conclusions as to cause his wife to hold her breath and bite her lip, but he would go steadily forward in spite of her nervousness, though he knew a cross-examination was in store for him afterwards. He was always careful, however, to avoid crossing into paths not satisfactory to his naturally logical mind, and therefore generally came out of such examinations with at least an acknowledgment that his error was 'not proven.'

'You always appear to make your ground good,' his wife would say, 'but I am confident something is wrong somewhere, though I don't know where it is.'

'And I am equally certain of the same thing, my girl,' he would reply, and though I do not yet know where it is, I am confident we shall see it some day, and then it will either be a new, or a restoration of the old lost revelation to the world.'

Such was the man and his position when we make his acquaintance during his first visit to the Great City.

The proprietors of the *Cottominster Gazette*, with whom he was engaged at the time, had just secured the rights of a provincial building journal languishing for lack of funds, the advertising pages of which had been placed in Pawley's hands. In the transference of the paper it was proposed to enlarge its scope into a national rather than a local journal; in furtherance of this scheme he was at present engaged.

Tressey, being quite comfortable, waited, but as neither Gradeley nor Pawley commenced the conversation he opened his eyes to find them both engaged in perusing a magazine.

'Pardon me, Mr. Pawley,' he ventured, 'but I am really very anxious to hear your opinion of the doctor.'

'I was delighted - it was a treat I shall long remember.'

'No! what's that? You don't mean it!' exclaimed Gradeley, dropping his chin so as to look at Pawley over his *pince-nez*, and his magazine was thrown aside as a very secondary matter. Do you really want me to believe that you could possibly enjoy listening to Parker?'

'It was more than enjoyment, my dear sir; I was simply charmed with the novelty.'

'Humph! Your ideal of a preacher is not a very high one. I call him a popinjay, a mountebank, a punchinello - anything but a preacher!'

'Perhaps I was at a disadvantage from not borrowing your glasses,' Pawley lightly excused himself.

'Good, good, very good, my friend,' said Tressey, evidently more of Pawley's opinion.

'Of course there are preachers and preachers,' Pawley continued, regaining his seriousness, and it is well we don't all rush to the same pulpit. Still there are not two Parkers; he is unique - not to be compared with any man.'

'He may be unique, but he is no preacher.'

That would have finished the subject so far as Pawley was concerned, but Tressey wished it otherwise and so roused himself to explain, -

'Friend Gradeley has very pronounced and conservative ideas as to what a preacher should and should not be, and the doctor does not square with them.' 'I should like to see him square himself with anything in creation,' growled Gradeley, savagely fighting a refractory leaf of the periodical he had again taken up. 'So far as I understand him he expects everything to be squared by himself. I wonder the Yankees don't cart him off to Boston.'

'And why there?' queried Tressey.

'Oh, they say Boston is the hub of the universe, and Parker thinks he's the centre of the hub.'

'That would be a loss we could ill afford to sustain,' Pawley averred. 'I don't say I should elect to hear him regularly, but he is a great preacher none the less.'

'But there is no wear in him, man!' vehemently exclaimed Gradeley. 'When you have done laughing at his antics and lost your fear that he will throw his head into the middle of the church, he positively palls on you, and you long to get back to the rest and quiet of an ordinary sermon.'

'As to his wearing qualities I am neither in a position to judge nor offer an opinion after once hearing him. I simply answered Friend Tressey according to the impression he made upon me before the service ended. Had I been asked of my first impression I should have answered somewhat differently.'

'Give me your first idea then. I have more confidence in them than second

thoughts.'

'When he first came into the pulpit his strong physique, rugged, furrowed face, stolid expression and electric hair instantly reminded me of one of the old prophets, say Elijah or John the Baptist, but I confess I also thought he would have been more suitably appavelled in camel's hair than a silken gown.'

'But that is just what he is - he is like it in every particular - nothing but incongruities.'

'Not all, Gradeley. There is a residue.'

'Well, you who know him better must settle that point between you,' Pawley resumed, but I confess that the silken gown on such a man appeared to me for the moment to be a most ineffectual attempt to blend the palace with the wilderness, and as I looked at him the Master's inquiry from the Scribes respecting John rose to my mind - "What went ye out for to see: a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in King's houses!"'

'Splendid, Pawley, splendid,' cried the excitable Gradeley, as he jumped to his feet and rushed to the stationery cabinet, 'you are a deucedly clever fellow after all.'

'What are you going to do now?' asked Tressey.

'Going to do?' tearing off his pince-nez and polishing them most energetically, 'why, I am going to write to Parker at once and give him that item of criticism. It may perhaps do him good. It's the best thing I have heard for some time.'

'Don't, Gradeley; take my advice and don't do it.' 'Why not? I hate autocrats as I hate the -'

'Hush! Hush!' interjected Tressey, with an approach to animation.

'Why should I hush? He would say devil and why should not I? I say I hate autocrats, and especially those of the pulpit, and if I can take him down a peg why should I hesitate to do it?'

'Have you thought that he might reply?'

'Then I should have the satisfaction of knowing how hard I had hit him.'

'Or knowing how hard he can hit back,' suggested the clerk, excelling himself. I can think of nothing more likely when he reads about the clothing in kings' houses than his asking you whose house he was in when he wore the silken gown. Then where would you be?'

'Go on with your story, Pawley,' and Gradeley turned irritably from the writing

table to his original seat; we don't often gain much beside abuse in an argument with mountebanks. I apologise for interfering with you, but that fellow always makes my blood boil.'

'No,' answered Pawley, 'I should be very sorry to vex you with anything I might say. Let us speak of something different, and I will give Tressey my opinion privately.'

'What!' cried Gradeley, far more incensed than conciliated by the suggestion, and allow you to think that I am not able to control myself when his name is mentioned in my presence? Go on, Pawley, go on; you are sadly mistaken if you are under the impression that Dr. Parker is anything but a matter of contempt to me. Proceed with your first impression of him; I am interested to learn your opinion.'

'I have no wish to criticise or pass any kind of judgment upon him; that must necessarily be the work of those who have studied the man - his abilities, his style, and the results thereof. But I may rightly speak of the impression he made upon me, or perhaps the series of impressions I received between the opening and the close of the service.'

'Yes, let us hear them,' Tressey whispered languidly.

'I have already given you my first thought, which, in conjunction with what I considered the peculiar mannerisms of the doctor, somewhat prevented me from joining so heartily in the devotional exercises as I could wish. The place was filled with an over-brooding of the Spirit - the power overshadowing the man made me conscious of the presence of what Herbert Spencer calls "The Eternal Reality," and never before have I been made to feel the weakness and impotence of words in worship as I did this morning; but with all this I was distracted and held back by the - perhaps I ought not to say it, but I know no other way of giving expression to my feelings - eccentric incongruities, which at the same time I knew were the natural accentuations of the man's intensity. He ought to preach from a rock rather than from a pulpit, with his discarded staff and homespun prophetic mantle thrown carelessly behind him, and his congregation standing, sitting, lying, perched among the jutting spurs of the mountain fastness. Surrounded as he was this morning was to do all injustice to him and by association robbed him of more than half his grandeur. It was as if a rough and uncut diamond had been carefully and tenderly embedded in a velvet casket, while its rugged, stalwart adamant beauty cried out for the pick, the spade and sleeve-rolled miner. There are silver-tongued and dreamy, poetic preachers for such pulpits - men who can take their harps like David and lead their flocks "in green pastures" and "beside the still waters," but Parker is not such a one. He is too stalwart, too muscular, too intrepid, too heroic for such a place. I cannot imagine him delivering such a message as "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people;" he would be nervous about the pitch and time of it; but put him upon

the watch tower and he will make his clarion notes reverberate from end to end of the valley, and the echoes of his voice will roll from crag to peak of the mountains as he cries, "Awake thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" If Parker ever has peace, it will have to be after labour: his rest will be at nightfall, never in the morning. He must climb, and whoever would be with him must follow, for his soul is reaching impatiently after the unattained. The mountain may be steep, but effort and struggle will develop muscle; the rocks are sharp, jagged and difficult, but these will inspire caution and courage. He is not ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the charming and peaceful beauties of the valley life, but his healthy, robust soul finds greater delight in the wild, majestic grandeur, the awful glory and the eternal nature-anthems which are seen and heard up there among the peaks that are heaven-kissed and crowned with inspiration. His ears are not deaf to the soothing song of the rivulet, but its music is not half so sweet as the full chorus of the frantic, dashing, foaming, thousand-tongued waterfall. What a song of jubilation he hears in the wild cataract as it lays at his feet whole volumes of parable, homily, exhortation and illustration! How the never-resting water dances with delight as it rushes to do its duty; leaping merrily from crag to crag, breaking itself on rock and point into coruscations of gems whose fires are lit by the hand of the Divine Lapidary! Amid such scenes the doctor's great soul can breathe freely and expand with the invigoration of heaven, and his deep nature is stirred to its voiceless depths. It is only my opinion, and I may be wrong, but I think if he is to be heard when the mantle of inspiration falls most naturally upon him, when the book of his poetic imagery has all its seals broken, when his voice is most correctly tuned to concert pitch, and his tongue free as God would have it, you must go with him into such spiritual solitudes, and hear him as the rustic rhythm of nature rolls from his overflowing soul with the freedom of the bounding waterfall - watch the sweep and bending of his spirit as the winds of heaven play around him, and his faith takes wing in daring attempts to grasp the impossible things of God that he may break and feed the hungry multitudes around him. At such a time, under the impulse of such prophetic eloquence, the peculiarities, yea, even the man himself, will be lost in his gospel, and on the wings of his revelation he will lift you higher, higher, higher, until in the whirlwind of the vision he will disclose the presence of eternal peace, and the eye of faith will be purified and strengthened to bear the sight of the invisible. Then as his majestically-soaring soul descends and folds its wings in a weary consciousness of its failure to do what was possible, you will breathe a sigh of gratitude and say, "It is good for us to be here!"

Pawley ceased with a sigh, as if conscious that he had sadly failed to express himself. Gradeley made no attempt to reply, but Tressey reached out his hand to the speaker.

'Thank you!' he said very quietly. 'Your discourse has placed the doctor before me in a new light. I wish I had been with you this morning.'

'So do I. But I hope you had a good time.' 'Thank you - yes.'

'Where did you go, Tressey?' inquired Gradeley. 'To St. Sepulchre's.'

'Oh! That's worse again.'

'I think so when Mr. Pawley talks as he does about the doctor; but I was a fortnight late with my communion and it was causing me some little discomfort.'

'Discomfort!' gasped Pawley, amazed to hear the word in such a connection. 'What on earth do you mean?'

'Pardon me if I made a mistake in my choice of the word, and yet I am not sure I could find a better one to express my meaning. You see we are all creatures of habit, and if anything disturbs our ordinary routine we experience a certain amount of discomfort. For instance, we wear a particular suit on Sunday, and if anything takes place to prevent this one week, we feel as if there had been no Sunday. Now that is just what I mean by saying I was uncomfortable because I was two weeks late in my communion.'

Pawley looked but said nothing.

'You should do as I do,' suggested Gradeley; get into the habit of taking it regularly every Easter morning, and so ensure a maximum of comfort with a minimum of trouble.'

'Surely you take it more frequently than that?'

'No, I don't, honestly. And to tell you the truth I should not take it then but for our vicar. He is a very decent kind of fellow, and since he joined the Church Union has wanted to make a good show in the competition for most communicants on Easter morning. So to oblige the old fellow we make a kind of family parade, but I am always glad when the penance is over, for that is just what it amounts to.'

'What a singularly interesting confession,' remarked Tressey. 'Now, Mr. Pawley, may I ask what is your rule, though, as a Nonconformist, I suppose you adhere to the monthly system?'

'That is a service I never join in now,' he replied very quietly.

Gradeley dropped his chin and stared at the speaker over his glasses in incredulous astonishment, and Tressey started, carelessly allowing his feet to fall to the floor.

'What, never?'

'No, gentlemen. Not now! I did so for years regularly once in the month; but I

afterwards saw a deeper meaning in the service than I had been accustomed to attach to it, and since that time I have not - and perhaps may never be able to take it again.'

'What a strange man you are!'

'Am I? Well, perhaps I am.'

'There is no perhaps about it; it's a solid certainty,' Gradeley declared. 'No man can be a Christian who refuses to take the communion.'

Pawley leaned across the table, and the calmness of his voice evidenced the intensity of his feelings as he spoke.

I have not yet made any claim to being a Christian, my friend - not because I would not, but rather that I cannot honestly do so. It is not, to my mind, a claim to be made as lightly and thoughtlessly as some imagine, but an ideal to be attained to and carrying with it a responsibility too weighty for me to attempt to bear at present. When, if ever, I am able to reach this, I shall be able to sit down again at the table of the Lord, but in the meantime "the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace and joy through the Holy Ghost."

'There is no necessity to get so serious over the matter I hate so much feeling; it makes one so deucedly creepy.'

'This is one of the questions naturally calculated to do so if we face it honestly, and no man can understand or appreciate it otherwise.'

'But why, if you feel so strongly upon the point, don't you conform to it?' inquired Tressey.

'Because, like the centurion of old, "I am not worthy."'

'Neither is any man worthy in himself,' returned Gradeley, 'but he is made so in the act.'

'Such is the idea if not the direct teaching of the English Church, I know; but in this the Church is opposed to Paul, who declares, "wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup: for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." I know my own unworthiness, therefore I abstain.'

'But what about Christ's declaration that "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in you"?'

‘Are you sure that in your eucharistic service you do eat His flesh and drink His blood?’

‘Most assuredly we do in a mystical sense.’

‘And did Christ say it was to be done in such a sense?’ ‘How otherwise can it be done?’

‘In an actual, spiritual and hence far more real compliance than any pretended mysticism that a dogmatic theology has tried to weave around the observance. When Christ made the declaration you advance He accompanied it with the definition that “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” His own meat and drink was to do the will of His Father, and all who in sincerity and truth aspire to follow Him and be called by His name are called upon to drink of His cup and be baptised with His baptism.’

‘Then what was the good of His great substitutionary work - but perhaps you wish to ignore this?’

‘No man can afford to ignore anything the Master taught, but I am equally jealous to discern between His teachings and the interpretations and speculations of the Church concerning them - Christ is my sole authority on Christianity.’

‘That claim is scarcely a peculiarity of your own,’ answered Gradeley, with a touch of patronising sarcasm. But, pardon me, theology is not a strong point with me. My health I leave with my doctor and religion with my parson; they each attend to their own department, and there I leave them.’

‘May I ask whether you obtained your degree at Cambridge by the same process?’

‘I scarcely see the drift of your inquiry.’

‘Did you leave the matter with your professors and obtain your M.A. upon their qualifications?’

‘Did I act like an idiot?’ he replied with irritable bluntness, which Pawley understood to be more manner than intended. A Cambridge course is for intellectual development, but religion is purely a matter of obedience and faith. Confound it, man, if you are determined to argue the point you must see to it that your analogies are relevant or I have done with the point at once.’

This request touched Pawley in his most sensitive point - his unsystematic and desultory education - and he hesitated nervously for a moment, wondering whether he had blundered. If so he failed to see it, while at the same time he discovered a fallacy in his friend’s position, so he took courage and stifled his confusion.

‘I am exceedingly anxious to avoid any false analogies,’ he answered, ‘and I fail to see where my reference to Cambridge lacks pertinacity. Granting your own definition that the university cultivates the intellect and religion faith, I would ask you if we are not exhorted to “add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge”? Therefore intellect and faith are very nearly related after all. But I would take a higher authority than Paul in this matter: the Master in His great invitation speaks thus – “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me”; and again – “I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear (understand) them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.” I think this very clearly refers to an intellectual development as being necessary before we reach the standard He raised. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” If I understand these words aright faith must be equally grounded in intellect as obedience.’

‘But where are you going to leave room for the great substitutionary work of Christ?’ he inquired, turning from the particular point to his favourite dogma.

‘We want no room for any such doctrine in Christianity,’ replied Pawley, since it had no place in the teaching of its Founder, who declared as one of the cardinal rules of life, “With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again,” and we have a further assurance in the same spirit by Paul that “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” These declarations render substitution impossible, and in no parable, discourse, prayer or action of Christ is there any hint at such a mode of escape from sin. If this had been the central fact in His life - the one sweet note in His evangel, as the Church has affirmed it to be - would He not have declared it when the young ruler put the direct question to Him – “What must I do to obtain eternal life?”

‘How could He proclaim it before the atonement had been made?’

‘The Church insists that the Levitical sacrifices were typical of Christ and were understood to be prophetic of His great work. If Moses, David and the Jewish nation for centuries had been taught to believe this fact, how was it, in putting forth His claim to be the promised Messiah, He did not point this young man to this great central figure of all prophecy and ceremonial?’

‘I suppose He knew what was best to be done and He did it.’

‘Undoubtedly He did. He was the incarnation of Truth, and He tells us most distinctly and unequivocally that “not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from

Me ye that work iniquity! Where in this utterance can you find room to insert substitution?’

I tell you I am no theologian - they have determined that there is not only room but have also given it the central position of our faith - and I am content to accept their authority when I remember some words of Christ you appear to have overlooked.’

‘What are they?’

“‘This is My body which is broken for you.’”

‘Broken as an example, not as a substitute. “For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.” Just so did He mean when He made use of the even stronger phrase – “This is My blood of the new testament, which is being shed for many unto the remission of sins.” It is here again an example to pour out one’s life in holy obedience by which remission of sins is to be obtained.’

‘Peter appears to have thought differently when he declared, “He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.”’

‘I am not so sure that Peter did have such an idea as you imagine in his mind at all. His words bear a very different interpretation. But even though he did I am not responsible for Peter’s construction any more than I am for his denial. We are not to be saved by Peter’s exposition, but by the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the certainty of this - the awful responsibility this discipleship, as set forth by Christ, places upon our shoulders - that makes me pause, and keeps me back from the table of the Lord. We must follow Him; and this implies drinking of His cup as well as being baptised with His baptism. Our way will lie through His Gethsemane, where we must pray His prayer and be prepared to share His agony and sweat His bloody sweat should God demand it; while every argument, sophistry and claim of time and sense are urged against us by him who is transformed into an angel of light to give cogency and point to his reasoning; while a thousand impulses, distorted duties and affections tear us to pieces in a lying desire to save us; while position, advancement and honour are held out, it may be, for our reward, we must be strong to refuse, and say “Thy will be done” and follow Him even into the loneliness of death, that we may rise into the exaltation of glory. This is my reason - my unworthiness - for not taking the sacrament, though I pray for strength to enable me to willingly leave all for Christ, and then I will do so. Then I will fearlessly drink that cup with Him and never be my own again; where He leads I will follow, and where He needs it I will minister; I will then aspire to carry one portion of His cross, to be one with Him in life, in death, and then - at home. If I am worthy thus to be perfected until I can taste the rapture of such complete, unqualified obedience, then I will cry “My Lord and my God!” and taking the cup will drink and die that He may live again in me.’

As he ceased speaking Gradeley and Tressey rose together; the latter gave Pawley his hand again in a pressure too eloquent for words, and a moment later he was left alone.

Chapter II - Olivia

Charles Tressey had spent the usual number of hours with his pen in Wood Street, returned to Shaftesbury Hall, ordered his tea, 'just as usual, please', but was quite ignorant of the fact that the modest meal had been served at least ten minutes and his muffin already cold and tough as leather. Certainly the maid had omitted to announce service, as she was most punctilious to do to others, but she knew it would only be useless in the case of Tressey, whose life moved in the mechanical, just-as-usual, groove, and any effort to disturb him would only be thrown away.

He had thrown off his walking shoes and reached his slippers, then with a saccharine smile he paused - just as usual - and immediately became involved in discussing the one fascinating problem of his life. Most men would have wearied long ago and abandoned it as being unworthy of such a waste of time, but Tressey was not of that fickle and unappreciative number; though he neither progressed in his inquiry nor in anywise tended to elucidate the mystery, morning, noon or night at home, and many times during a day at the office, he returned with ever-increasing zest to the inquiry he had so patiently pursued for fully twenty years: 'Now which of those two feet is really the prettier?'

It was the entrance of Pawley that roused him from his engrossing reverie on this occasion.

'Ah, my friend!' exclaimed the clerk, not in the least irritated by the interruption of his thoughts, 'I hope you have had a pleasant and also a successful day?'

'Thank you - yes,' he replied, drawing a chair near the not unwelcome fire. 'The day, so far as I am concerned, has been both pleasant and successful. In fact, my whole journey has been of the same order. I have already done nearly double the business I expected, and still have hopes of more to follow.'

Here we catch a glimpse of one of those inadvisable indiscretions in the character of this man, which, though not necessarily injurious in themselves, are sometimes capable of being turned to serious disadvantage by the unscrupulous. He was in every sense too generous - alike in imparting information as well as charity. Conscious of his own honour and rectitude, he readily gave to each last acquaintance credit for being as himself, even though his past experience warned him from doing so. His difficulties in the past had derived much strength from the over-confidence, and yet his optimistic soul still shrank from entertaining a shadow of suspicion for

any man. Still it must be pointed out that this weakness existed only within well-defined personal limits; in his business or outside relationships he recognised perhaps with more severity than most men that he was only a steward, and held whatever pertained to others in a trust which involved a responsibility in no way lightly esteemed. He presented in this respect a strange contradiction to the great majority of men, having towards himself a careless disregard of his own good amounting almost to reckless negligence; refusing to assert his rights, maintain the most palpable claim, or demand fulfilment of obligations until actually compelled to do so by the claims of others or stress of circumstances. At the same time, if he saw an act of injustice to another - especially if the sufferer was unable to defend himself - every impulse within him would rush to arms and he would champion his cause with the dauntless courage of a lion.

‘That is a most pleasant thing to hear.’ At that moment he caught sight of his forgotten tea. It is not every man who makes a success in his first visit to London, and I trust your good fortune will continue.’

‘Thanks - I hope so.’

‘Charles! Oh, you naughty man! You have again allowed your tea to get cold.’ This from Miss Prout, who had entered the room with her arms full of needlework, according to her custom of spending an hour or so with her boarders in the early evening. ‘I am thoroughly ashamed of you. That tea has been upon that table for fully fifteen minutes while you have been wantonly giving yourself up to the lust of your eyes by admiring your feet. Now don’t attempt to defend yourself, when I know full well what you have been doing. I am ashamed of you, at your time of life too, and after all the trouble I have taken with you. I declare this muffin is as cold as a stone, but you shall eat it, though it was like a block of ice, in spite of the consequences. You tempt Providence almost past bearing by your vanity, and I am expecting to see something very terrible happen to your feet some day. You will be sorry then when it’s too late. Oh, Mr. Pawley, can I prevail upon you to say something to him?’

Both Pawley and the culprit laughed at the poor lady’s perturbation, which was really caused by his neglect to eat his tea, since she took a special pride in having everything ‘just so’ for everyone.

‘Don’t worry about him, Miss Prout; if his feet are of more importance than his stomach let him suffer the consequences. Fortunately my feet are not of such unusual beauty, and if you will order my tea I will promise to attend to it at once.’

‘Certainly, Mr. Pawley, it is always a pleasure to do anything for a *reasonable* man. What would you like?’

‘You know what is in the larder, my dear lady, and I think I shall come off best if I leave that to you. I will merely say that I have an appetite, and be content to judge

how I stand in your esteem by the quality of the repast you provide.'

'Let me caution you to be careful in the language you address to mademoiselle, or you will find yourself very unpleasantly situated by-and-by. She is an acknowledged coquette, and construes the most ordinary speech into an indication of a confession to follow. Besides, you are a married man, and should be doubly careful, or I may consider it my duty to write to Cottominster.'

'And what would you be able to tell the dear lonely lady, pray?' asked the mock-indignant hostess. That her grandmother had been taking all care of her husband for her sake?

'It may suit you to put it in that form, but I must be allowed to frame my own communication. Mrs. Pawley may share my idea that age develops other qualities than experience.'

'Is that so, Charles? How fortunate for me that your opinion is not bound to be correct.'

'Take no notice of him - he is at all events old enough to know better, but he only wishes to keep you from ordering my tea so as to laugh at you presently.'

'Then he shall not do so,' and away the kindly soul went to give instructions for a most substantial repast.

These straws serve to indicate the current of home life at Shaftesbury Hall and are pleasant to note in passing as impromptu backgrounds to our picture.

'What are your proposals for the evening?' asked Tressey, presently.

'I have none so far. Why? Have you anything special on hand?'

'Not now; I had an idea, but after our talk yesterday I gave it up.'

'Why?'

'Because I think it would shock you.'

'Don't be alarmed at that,' he answered with an amused smile; my convictions are sufficiently deep-rooted to protect my feelings, and I think my feet are large enough to maintain my perpendicular in any earthquake at present threatening. What was your idea?'

'Do you ever go to the theatre?'

Pawley smiled.

'Not often, but I do go occasionally, if anything especially appeals to me. I believe

with the melancholy Jacques that it is possible to

“Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything”

‘Then you are not one of those men who condemn the stage unconditionally?’

‘No! I believe the stage is capable - within its legitimate limit - of preaching sermons as eloquent and powerful as the pulpit. We must not forget that the institutions have each their own particular sphere of operation, their rightful work to do, and individual lessons to enforce; in doing this they never occupy more than a relative position to each other - neither competitive nor comparable. The relationship is that of an elementary to an advanced school, both necessary in a thorough and complete education. The stage is entirely a human institution called into existence -

‘To hold, as ‘twere. the mirror up to nature,’

and show us by a kind of kindergarten lesson the law of sequence ever working to a natural fruition. Its scope is strictly limited to the past and present, it deals with men and things as they exist around us, vice and virtue in all phases and combinations, but there the province of the stage comes to an end. It gives no exhortation, nor attempts to interpret its facts, but the conclusion and moral of the play is left for the individual to draw or disregard as each may determine for himself. The duty of an actor is to study mankind with a view of playing his part, not according to any realised conception of humanity but in all its stern actualities, neither softening nor accentuating; without exaggeration or extenuation, simply representing life. He may be equally honourable in his profession whether he appears as the hero and exponent of virtue, or an execrable villain steeped in vice and infamy, since everyone knows he only assumes the character for the time and throws it off when the play is over. How different and far removed is all this from the sphere of the pulpit, which as a Divine institution is at once placed pre-eminently superior to any profession, and holds the mandate and power to transform the morals, minds and hence the lives of men into the ideal that God has set before His eyes. The foundation of the pulpit is laid within the rock of revelation, and its elevation rises into the clear atmosphere of inspiration among the visions of God. The preacher, as the leader and guide of men into that mysterious and higher region where the sensuous is inter-sphered by the super-sensuous, the temporal with the eternal, the natural with the spiritual, must – standing as a man among men - live, not act, or rather he must be transformed until the risen and glorified Christ can live again in him, and manifest Himself unto the world. The tongue that speaks from the pulpit must not declare the things of men, but utter the hidden things of God speaking as it is “moved by the Holy Ghost,” I notice your smile and know you are

asking yourself where such a preacher can be found, but that is a question with which I am not now concerned. I am simply interested in finding the standard the Master left us of the position to which preachers are called. If they fail to touch such an exalted standard to-day it is not because Christ has revised the qualifications or lowered the ideal of the ministry, but rather that other considerations have been allowed to prevail under whose influences the light and life have been buried, leaving us to grope our uncertain way in an artificial light casting shadows of misrepresentation on every hand, until we fear and fail to recognise the Father if by any chance we meet Him. No, my friend, I am not opposed to legitimate drama any more than a purified pulpit, but I rather pray that through the rising influence of the one we may be brought to a desirable reformation of the other.'

'You are a strange man, Pawley, if only from your readiness to preach a sermon at will upon every conceivable subject.'

'Don't call me a preacher, my friend,' he answered sorrowfully. 'I did once hope to be called into such exalted service, but God saw my unworthiness, and I have bowed to His decree.'

'Perhaps you are able to serve Him better as you are. In the pulpit you might have failed to put things so forcibly as you do now.'

'I have no wish or desire to put anything in any way, but am anxious only to direct attention to them just as I find them. I have no dogmatic axe to grind, no doctrinal crank to turn, no particular form of church government to maintain, but I want to get clear back to Christ, to hear the truth from His lips, to learn of Him, and Him alone. When I was a lad I was singularly impressed by the advice Shakespeare makes Wolsey address to Cromwell -

"Be just, and fear not:

Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,

Thy God's, and truth's,"

and I have tried in my own little way to adopt it as my rule of life. But what was the proposition you were about to make?'

'I was wondering whether you would join Gradeley and myself - we thought of going to the Court Theatre?' 'What is on there?'

'An adaptation of the Vicar of Wakefield, with Hermann Vezin as Vicar, and Ellen Terry in the title-role.'

'I shall be very pleased to go. I have never read the book, so I shall not only be interested but become acquainted with Goldsmith's masterpiece at the same time.'

'And I envy you the treat in store.'

With as little delay as possible - for the play was drawing overflowing houses - the three men reached Sloane Square and joined a group of twenty or thirty persons who were already congregated around the pit entrance to the theatre.

'We are in good time,' said Gradeley, consulting his watch before buttoning his overcoat. 'We have to wait forty minutes before the doors open.'

'We are none too early for a good seat,' answered Pawley.

'No. The crowd will constantly increase now. Mind your pockets,' whispered Tressey.

This hint was not unnecessary and probably saved Pawley's watch a little later. In those days the present excellent system of 'lining up' had not been inaugurated, but the stronger and more reckless stood the better chance in the organised rushes, and pickpockets could generally rely on a fair amount of business. The growing crowd was just beginning to tighten itself when Pawley felt a movement in front of him, which but for Tressey's hint might have passed unnoticed. With an unsuspecting and natural effort he freed himself slightly and at the same instant grasped a hand inside his overcoat.

'Ere, 'old on, guv'nor,' cried a man who stood sideways on his right, at the same time making a desperate snatch to release his imprisoned hand; what are yer tryin' to do? I can't 'elp a-shovin' when everybody's a-shovin' me, can I?'

'I don't object to your crushing, but you can help this other business. Come outside.'

'What's the matter, Pawley?'

'Nothing, fortunately I caught him in time. You go in and keep me a seat if you can.'

'I'll get yer one with 'em for a tanner,' cried a little fellow close at hand.

'All right, I'll give you sixpence to do so.' Where are you going?' asked Tressey.

'I shall be back directly. You go in.'

The crowd, never anxious to detain such visitors as Pawley had detected, had already made a way, and he half dragged the protesting fellow to the outside.

‘Don’t be hard on me, sir; I ain’t a thief,’ he pleaded, when he found the uselessness of trying to escape.

‘That’s not your fault. Now what have you to say for yourself?’

‘I’m very sorry, sir; but I ain’t a thief, an’ if you knew everything I don’t think yer’d be ‘ard on me.’

‘How am I to know you are not a thief?’

He asked the question more to enable him to learn the man’s story than to satisfy his own doubt, for something within him - perhaps also strengthened by the man’s conduct - assured him, that his prisoner was not a hardened offender.

‘Look ‘ere, sir; I can’t do no more than this to prove it to you,’ and he wet the index finger of the hand Pawley had released, upon his tongue, then, drawing it across his throat after the fashion of gutter children, said:

“Whether I live or whether I die,

God strike me dead if I’m telling a lie!”

‘Hush, man! don’t call God to witness such a thing.’ ‘What for not, if I’m speakin’ the truth? - an’ I’ll take my oath I am, sir.’

‘But why did you try to pick my pocket?’

‘Becos I’m drove to it, there; and swelp my bob, I’m speakin’ God’s own truth!’

‘Why don’t you get work, if you want it?’

‘Yer think that’s easy, doan’t yer?’ the fellow answered scornfully. ‘You ain’t long from the country - anybody can tell that.’

‘What has that to do with your getting work?’

‘If yer’d been in London a month yer’d know as jobs ain’t a-runnin’ about the streets arter fellows as is down on their luck.’

‘Do you want me to believe that you have tried to get work and failed?’

‘Look ‘ere, mister,’ cried the man, who had appeared to have lost sight of his danger in the contemplation of his real or imaginary grievance, it’s very plain you don’t know much about London, as I tells yer. If yer wants ter know what I say’s true or not come wi’ me about five minits an’ I’ll soon prove it ter yer.’

‘How?’

Come alon’ to my shanty - it ain’t far - an’ I’ll show yer my wife bad a-bed, where she’s bin for a month, an’ I can’t get nothin’ for her to eat. She had our last crust for dinner yesterday, an’ I’ve had nothing since Saturday. Wouldn’t that drive you to the devil?’

‘Where do you live?’

‘It’s on’y along this side o’ the square into King’s Road - it ain’t more’n three minutes if yer’ll come,’ and the fellow half started to lead the way.

‘If what you say is really true, I am not the man to add to your hardships; but mind, if you deceive me or attempt to do so you will be sorry for it. Lead the way; I will come with you.’

‘All right, sir,’ and the fellow at once started off.

‘If it on’y depends on my tellin’ the truth I’ve got nothin’ to fear. If we look sharp you can be back afore the door opens.’

‘Where are you going, Pawley?’ asked Tressey, who had been anxiously watching his friend.

‘To see where this man lives, and if the story he tells me is true.’

‘Take my advice - let him go free if you choose, but don’t go with him.’

‘Why not?’

‘Because you will get into trouble. He is trying to play an old trick upon you.’

‘Then you need not be afraid, for it will fail. I dare not do other than go with him, for if his story is true it was for this I came to the theatre to-night. If it is not true I have nothing to fear. “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil” how can I when I have the promise that “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways?” I am well protected, my friend; don’t be alarmed, I will come to you presently.’

‘Oh, Pawley, you have a great faith.’ And feeling his inability, even if he had the desire, to shake it he turned back to the theatre.

Tressey’s solicitation had for the moment incautiously drawn Pawley’s attention from the man, and when he again thought of him he turned, naturally expecting to find him gone. But no; he was standing at a discreet distance - first reward of present faith as well as a promise of future safety.

‘Come along,’ he said in a more compassionate tone than he had previously used. ‘How far have we to go?’

‘Not far, sir; we’ll be there in two minutes.’

From the King’s Road they turned down Blackland’s Terrace, then to the right into Simmonds Street, at that time consisting of low and disreputable tenements scarcely fit for vermin to find shelter in. It was doubtful for a time whether the desired door would open or prefer to fall to pieces, but the man having presently succeeded in his effort they entered a passage in which it was impossible for them to see their way.

‘Mind ‘ow yer come, sir - feel yer way by the wall on yer left; I can’t strike a light because we ain’t got none.’

Carefully following this advice and using both hands and feet to guide him, Pawley at length reached the foot of a decidedly musical and flexible flight of stairs, up which he cautiously made his way, until a door on the landing was thrown open and the additional light gave him more confidence.

The room they entered could scarcely be called a furnished apartment, having but one broken chair, a dilapidated table, supported on one side by the wall, an orange box serving as couch or additional seats as required, and a mysterious arrangement in the corner doing duty as a bed.

‘There yer are, sir; this is my shanty - the ‘ome of a British workin’ man who’s out o’ work, an’ there’s my missis, ill in bed, as I told yer.’

The woman made a laborious and painful effort to turn. She was evidently suffering from some serious affection of the chest demanding warmth and care, both of which - as well as food were altogether out of her reach. Pawley looked on the scene in speechless amazement - the man had told him the truth so far as he went, but certainly had not over-coloured the picture. The woman was forced to cease her struggle to turn before she could see her visitor, but in nervous interjections inquired, -

‘What’s the - matter - Jim? Who’s that? You ain’t got -’ she could say no more, being seized with a violent fit of coughing, through which her husband did his best to assist her. ‘You ain’t - done - nothing have you?’ she continued anxiously as soon as she could catch her breath.

‘No, Em’ly, of course I ain’t done nothink’ - and he looked at Pawley with piteous entreaty not to publish his offence. I was tellin’ this gentl’m’n as ‘ow ‘ard it is for a man when he’s down on ‘is luck, an’ ‘e could ‘ardly b’lieve it, so I brought ‘im in to see I wasn’t tellin’ ‘im a lie.’

By this time with her husband's help she had managed to turn and resting on one elbow appeared to breathe easier for the change.

'You don't know London if you think it's easy to get along in when you once meet with a misfortune,' she said. My Jim's as honest as most men, but he's gone under and this is all that is left of a very tidy working man's home. But I won't grumble, Jim, if you only keep out of trouble. It won't last long, and nobody can disturb the dead.'

'Don't talk like that, old gal; I ain't goin' to do nothin' wrong. We'll weather it some'ow, if I can on 'y get you a bit of food.'

'Is it really true, my good woman, that you have had no food to-day?'

Jim picked up a penny for a job on Saturday,' she replied, and bought bread with it, but he only eat a bit of his share, and I had the rest of it for my dinner yesterday. Neither of us have touched a bit since.'

'What is your name?'

'Cox, sir - Jim Cox.'

Pawley took five shillings from his pocket. He wanted to get away - such a scene of desperation was beyond him, and yet the resignation was almost heroic in its despair. He could find no words to speak, no sermon to preach from such a text, but the weight of the suffering crushed him, and though it was cowardly he wanted to be away.

'Here, take this, and get some fire and food at once,' he said, thrusting the money into the man's hand.' I am satisfied as to the truth of what you tell me, but remember there is a God whose ear is open to the cry of suffering - He does not forget you though men may, and who knows but that He has brought me here to help you tonight. Good-night,' he said, approaching the woman; I hope you will soon be better and your husband able to find some work to do.'

'Good-night, sir, an' God bless yer.'

The doors had not long been opened when he returned to the theatre, but with a little patience he reached the inside, much to the relief of his anxiously watching friends, who were comfortably located in the front row. As he took the seat his substitute had secured Tressey took his hand in warm congratulation.

'You little know how glad I am to see you safely back again. Are you sure you have not lost anything?'

'I am very glad I did not take your advice. No, I have not been robbed, thank you.'

‘Your clear duty was to hand that fellow to the police at once,’ said Gradeley. Any sympathy shown to such scoundrels only increases the public danger.’

‘I don’t think we are warranted in acting too precipitately. In this case, for instance, by doing so I should have committed a greater wrong than the one I sought redress for.’

‘Nonsense! The fellow has simply traded on your ignorance. I have no patience with such mistaken philanthropy and quixotic ideas. You will be a marked man for all London now, and it will not be long before you repent your generosity, I can assure you.’

‘I don’t agree with you, Gradeley. They tell us that there are indications of diamonds in some meteoric stones, and I have faith to think it is possible to find true men among the lapsed masses if we look for them.’

‘Perhaps so, but they would prove to be more costly than valuable.’

‘Never mind your speculations. What did you actually find out?’ asked Tressey.

‘That the man was practically driven to take some desperate means in an attempt to procure food for a sick wife.’

‘Sick fiddlesticks! I tell you it was only one of the old games that are carefully worked up to play on greenhorns. I hope I am with you the next time he makes his appearance - he’ll soon find himself in Queer Street, I can tell you.’

‘Hush!’

The curtain rose on the scene of the Vicar’s orchard, with its swing and merry family party, which received a warm greeting for its beauty.

Pawley’s nature was singularly intense, thorough, and whole-hearted. Into whatever subject he was interested in for the time he threw himself with an enthusiastic spontaneity that amounted to a practical oblivion of everything outside. In his life he had but really one aim, one purpose, one ideal, and in pursuit of it he sedulously limited himself to the one duty he had in hand. His nervous system was extremely delicate and highly strung, making him peculiarly sensitive to surrounding waves of feeling, by which he was frequently carried almost beyond himself into a semi-hypnotic condition he imagined to be the abode of that inspiration after which he so hungered and thirsted, where the prophets of old were instructed in the deep things of God. Upon this mysterious psychic boundary-land he had often consciously lingered since childhood, hoping to gain strength to stretch the wings, which as yet were powerless, and reach the presence and vision of the invisible. His dreams, hope and faith had all whispered to him that such was more than possible - probable, and his conception of God also affirmed it because the gift

had already been bestowed upon the men of the past; to this also was added the assurance of the Christ - 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name shall be given unto you.' He had asked, was continually asking, with a faith in no wise weakened by the conditional doubt whether such a gift to him was in accordance with the Divine will. This doubt, however, though always present, had but slight effect upon him since he argued that the deeply-rooted desire which possessed him warranted the faith that would be honoured if it did not faint or weary.

The outburst of feeling greeting the opening scene lifted Pawley at once into his ecstatic condition and he lost sight and thought of everything the theatre, his friends, the artistes (as such) - and became an unseen watcher over the interests and welfare of the Primrose family. With them he lived, rejoiced and suffered, sharing their confidences, hopes and fears, smiling, weeping, praying as they smiled and wept and prayed; and when at length the iron entered into their souls it found a quivering response in his own also. Not knowing the story, he followed each new development with bewildering blindness, and each new stroke fell upon him with unsoftened force, until the despised Burchell threw aside his mask, opened the prison doors, and restored them to peace and happiness once more. It was no play to him - there was no acts, but only grateful breathing spaces were allowed in which his overwrought feelings were able to partially recover themselves. The cheers which brought Miss Terry and her confreres again and again before the curtain did not disturb or affect him. The stream of the representation had carried him too far out into the sea of human life for the voices from the shore to reach him, and he, unseen, was enabled to watch the workings of sin in its natural element. He saw the disadvantage of unsuspecting innocence in the presence of the heartless betrayer, the casting adrift and the beating off of the forsaken from the raft of hope, then left mercilessly to perish, while the gilded yacht of pleasure sailed by, musical with the laughter of the remorseless soul who left Olivia to her fate. Every episode in the moral tragedy took hold of him with a new and firmer grip until the trivial accident of a falling curtain was lost in his scouring the horizon to see where help would come, and it was impossible to rouse him to a consciousness that after all it was nothing more than a magnificent make-believe.

When, however, the finale was reached, and the unexpected issue evolved from such unpropitious surroundings, the thunderous applause brought him to his feet, waving his hat and joining in the roar that shook the old house even while his eyes were wet with tears.

'What do you think of it, Gradeley? what do you think of it?' was Tressey's enraptured inquiry as soon as the weight of his admiration would allow him to speak. He was no doubt anxious to reach Pawley, but the one stood in the way and the other was as yet too abstracted to enter into any discussion or even express a

bald opinion.

‘Eh! What? Think of it! Why, man alive, I have seen the portraits and sculptures of all the world-acknowledged types of beauty, but, by Jove, not one of them is a circumstance in comparison with her.’

‘She did look simply beautiful to-night; but she was clothed upon with the inspiration of her part and it made her excel herself.’

‘What are you talking about, man? Do you mean to tell me that a common play-acting woman has blinded your eyes to a dream Divine like that!’ cried the enamoured artist, directing his attention to a lady who was still standing at the front of a private box.

‘Oh, bother the woman!’ retorted Tressey, without deigning to take a second glance. What is she in the presence of Terry’s Olivia?’

‘She! She!’ and he trembled with exasperated indignation at the uncultured preference of his friend. ‘Why, man alive, have you no soul, no eyes, no brains? If only Phidias had seen that woman when searching for a model to revenge himself on the Athenians, he would have gone raving mad with delight.’

‘How fortunate she was born so long after him,’ replied his tantalising friend.

‘Don’t be a fool, man - there’s nothing clever in laughing at your own ignorance. It’s only another of the d___d stupidities of nature to put such a distance between a worthy model and master. But, by thunder!’ he exclaimed as a new thought occurred to him, ‘there is both fame and fortune now for the man who can paint her. Let me find out who she is.’

In his excitement he mounted the seat and would probably have committed some indiscretion in his attempt to get out, but Tressey caught his coat and forcibly restrained him.

‘Take your time, my friend, take your time. It’s impossible to get out just yet. We have to pay our penalty now for having the best seats.’

‘You stop if you choose, but see, the woman’s gone. Loose my coat.’

‘I will if you will calm yourself, and not be in such a hurry to steal the laurels from Rembrandt and Reynolds for the sake of this beautiful unknown. What if you should discover that she is already married? and if not it is more than probable your admiration would be wasted upon her.’

‘Oh! don’t talk to me,’ returned the irritated and now defeated enthusiast; what do you know about the true instincts of art - you who are not capable of a thought

above the sensual? It is not the woman but the model that fascinates me.'

'My dear friend,' replied Tressey, 'I know all about it - no one would ever suppose that anything but a model could appeal to the soul of an artist. I am very sorry you should have seen such a vision only to lose it; but it's gone now - and we must go or be shut in. Come on, Mr. Pawley.'

As they were walking home from Blackfriars, Tressey took Pawley by the arm, having been unable to speak to him before.

'You are most unusually quiet,' he remarked.

'Am I? Perhaps I am, but I have been very busy with my thoughts. Pardon my unsociable mood.'

'I am very anxious to hear your opinion of Miss Terry's performance.'

'Are you? Then I am afraid you will be disappointed.'

'Why? Were you not pleased with it?'

'I don't know whether you will be able to understand me or not - in all probability not,' he answered; 'but from the moment when the curtain went up until now I have never once been conscious of the existence of Miss Terry; even the idea of a play has never once crossed my mind. I have simply been engaged - engrossed - in the study of a series of evolutions in actual life, contemplating developments that are going on all around us, watching the unfoldment of sequences not often available with such moving realism; and now, when the memory of my experience is settling down into a contemplative perspective, and I am able to analyse a part in its relationship to the whole, the lights and shades in the picture are balanced with such master-strokes of genius that individualisation is almost an impossibility. Of necessity, Olivia occupies the central foreground, but who is to say which part of the great creation belongs to Miss Terry and which to Goldsmith? To make any attempt at such a dissection would entirely destroy the effect, and therefore you must pardon me if I choose to let it stand in its entirety. As a whole it appeals to me even more strongly than the sermon of the doctor did yesterday. I think we have seen the stage to-night in its purest, best and noblest form, and consequently it has preached a sermon it will be difficult to forget - I pray it may also be long continued.'

'I am glad you enjoyed it, but I rather courted your opinion from a less serious point of view. I regard the theatre more as an amusement and relaxation.'

'And what you seek you find, in the theatre as in every other institution. Institutions, amusements, relaxations and pastimes are not in themselves, as a rule, either good or bad, but they become just what we are prepared to make of them. I have no objection to the theatre as an amusement - I enjoy it, and am prepared to

draw a full measure of pleasure therefrom, but you must provide a comedy before I am able to do so. It would only be a debased and vicious man who could find any approach to amusement in watching such a tragedy of sin such as we have witnessed to-night.'

'That is all very well so far, but if you insist on such a general religious atmosphere, I am afraid life would not be worth living - it would be too ponderous.'

'Whenever life becomes a wearisome burden, my friend, you had better pause at once, for, rest assured, its weight will be the evidence that you have ceased to follow in the steps of Christ, and gone after self-deceived innovators. The Master threw - and His life is to be our standard and example - so much charm and fascination into His religion that all men sought for Him even though they failed to understand Him. It was enough that everyone who came into contact with Him felt that He possessed the "Something" for which every heart was hungering. Whether they were Jewish bigots or Greek or Roman pagans, dwellers in a palace or homeless wanderers, possessed of devils or eaten up with leprosy, blind, halt, impotent, or wallowing in the mire of social ostracism, saint or sinner, young and old, rich and poor, all sought Him because in Him, and in Him alone, was found the one great desire of nations. The one true spark of divinity in all who saw Him cried "All Hail," and worshipped Him, while incarnate devils shouted through every voice of sensuality, "Crucify Him." It was the one decisive battle of the ages raging around the gate of Immortality, and though He was wounded and mangled in His flesh, His conquering spirit threw the gate wide open, and gave us ingress to the great liberty wherewith He made us free. No, sir, true religion is no oppressor, but rather a bearer of our burdens; faith lightens sorrow, and gives hope to the weary and heavy laden; its watchword is Liberty, and its heritage Freedom! All this - which is the Christ evangel - the world needs as much as ever, but it does not find it in the religion we offer, therefore men turn away and will have none of it. Why is this? Is it because the Christ has gone? No, He is still the central figure, but it is not the Christ of the Galilean hills, who received sinners and ate with them, but the Christ of Herod's judgment hall, clothed in the mocking garments of another king, crowned with a diadem of pain and blood, and bearing in His hand a sceptre without strength or support. It is Jesus in the hands of dogmatic warders and doctrinal soldiers, beaten, maltreated, cast out and unrecognised. Bring Him out from the judgment hall of the doctors once again, strip Him of the gewgaws in which He has been ignominiously dressed, allow Him to drop the academic language of the professor's chair, and speak once more in His homely tongue, pull down the denominational bars at which He has to plead, and let Him stand once more free beneath God's heaven and give again the invitation "Come unto Me, all ye that weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and the music of that voice will silence all the strifes which now divide and inflame us; you will then see that a genuine religious atmosphere is neither ponderous nor oppressive, but from hill and vale, hamlet and city, island and

continent will come the old response - "All men seek for Thee." ‘

‘I should like to think it could be so, but, unfortunately, London is not Jerusalem, and the Sermon on the Mount could not be enforced to-day.’

‘Why not? What is there impracticable in it? To commence with, the great foundation thought of the Sermon is to be found in the golden rule - "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." What is there here that could not be applied to London with advantage?’

‘Pardon me, but I think you are wrong; as I understand it, religion rightly commences with "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." ‘

‘That is no part of the Sermon on the Mount to which you objected only a moment ago; but it makes very little difference, because the two are closely connected after all. John very clearly lays down the principle that "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Now, in his sermon Jesus insists on practically the same thing, when He says, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." It suits our creed to remember the words of Christ - "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," but it also suits us to forget that Christ’s interpretation of that door was Himself in His humanity - "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto Me." What a change would result if every pulpit in London magnified this, if every church insisted on spiritual compliance as a test of membership! But to say that its application to London is an impossibility is to say that God’s way of salvation is a failure - not applicable to England; that Christ in His simple teaching is not sufficient for our needs but requires to be corrected, adapted, revised, improved and amplified; that the Omniscient has been guilty of an oversight we have been compelled to correct in our own behalf. Will you or any other man have the assurance to make such a proposition - and yet you must either do so or confess that we have forsaken the simple truth as it is in Jesus, and gone seriously astray in Bunyan’s By-path Meadow.’

‘But do you really believe it is necessary to make such a parade of religion?’

‘No, it is just that one thing I particularly object to - our one-day religion is necessarily a parade. It was just this that provoked our Lord’s severe rebuke of the Pharisees. Religion is life, and business is at most but an incident therein, and the greater naturally includes the lesser, which must consent to be controlled and dominated thereby. How much better and more satisfactorily would our business be managed if we could drop the Sunday suit altogether, and allow a little genuine religion to blow occasionally through the City suit. Do you see that lamp yonder?’

‘Yes.’

‘That does not parade itself, but its light shines because something within has been touched and fired by a flame from without; and it leapt to perform a required duty, assisting to guide you and I on our way. “Let your light so shine” - not parade itself, but patiently wait for the summons that shall call to duty.’

Tressey had exhausted his store of argument, so turned to see what had become of Gradeley, who hung back in a brown study of his own.

‘I have made up my mind to go to the theatre in the morning and ascertain who that lady was,’ he boldly declared as he came up to his waiting friends.

‘Oh, bother your woman,’ said Tressey. ‘Ellen Terry is worth a thousand of her.’

And so the three men of varied minds and temperaments reached Shaftesbury Hall.

Chapter III - An Australian Miner

The strength and prominence of England among the nations of the earth is not so much due to her colonies and extent of empire as to the unique institution of her home life. The colonial bond is but a radiation of the family tie, and the love of motherland is only a development from the stronger maternal affection which makes the name of mother, in any conjunction, sacred to every British heart. No son of other language could in his exile have interpreted the inspiration which flooded the soul of John Howard Payne, and made him sing -

*‘Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.’*

Within the subtle magic of its prescribed circle is to be found a never-failing repose and recuperation for the weary and discomforted - a solace and encouragement giving strength to shoulder the daily cross once more; a garden of hope filled with fragrant flowers of promise the school of successful ambition, the walls of which are filled with memories of past achievements inciting to emulation; an observatory from which a brighter future is descried crowned with the golden aureole of mighty possibilities and rewards. England is strong because of the mystic potentialities of her home life, in the fastnesses of which the roots of the nation twine around the hearts of her sons, and strong she must remain while the purity of the sacred institution is defended. Guard first the home circle, and that in turn will protect the nation, for the strength of every fortress lies in its foundations, not in the acreage of its possessions. The exhortation is equally relevant to the nation as to the individual - ‘Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,’ Oh,

England! thy blessings have fallen upon thee with unmeasured liberality; see to it that thy responsibilities are not forgotten, for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.'

This value and importance of the home life had not escaped the thoughtful attention of Miss Prout, who in the most unobtrusive manner had successfully engrafted it into the general routine of her ever-changing family. So delicately and naturally had this been accomplished and maintained that the Friday evening reunions were always regarded as a privilege rather than an interference, and it was seldom a boarder was willing to be absent therefrom.

Saturday always brought its necessary changes, and though some of the acquaintances were not yet a week old it was not infrequent to find a shadow of regret in these gatherings at the thought of the Farewell which the morrow would bring. A week at Shaftesbury Hall was bound to produce some sweet memories in many instances everlasting flowers that would remain both fresh and fragrant for the bouquets of heaven. In those two or three final hours stolen from the rush of the Great City friendships were firmly cemented, and many a young fellow went forth stronger to grapple with the duties of coming days. It was not in any sense a religious gathering, but a free-and-easy social time over which the ever-busy hostess presided, always plying her sewing or knitting needles. It was purely and simply a family gathering, *sans* formality; bright, cheerful and not unusually boyish, in spite of grey hairs and furrowed cheeks. The shadows of the morrow were banished in the present cheer, and every soul was made to feel at home.

The Friday before Pawley's departure had come, and every member of the family had gathered to spend the evening with one whom all respected and for whom many felt even a warmer sympathy. But somehow, as one by one came into the room, it became noticeable that there was an absence of the usual verve and hilarity that generally characterised their assembly. There was an awkward, persistent constraint none could break down, since no one had, nor could find, anything to say. Every attempt at conversation ended in a miserable failure, until at length first one and then another took up a paper or magazine in order to screen what amounted to a stupid confusion.

Especially was this the case with one young fellow who had but recently returned from the Australian goldfields, where he had squandered what little patrimony he had received, contracted habits of drinking and gambling, and was rapidly shortening his career. Some friends had communicated with his sister, and after much difficulty he had been induced to return. On his arrival the genial secretary of the Y.M.C.A. had placed him with Miss Prout, under whose careful surveillance it was hoped he would be able to recover himself.

He was a warm-hearted, free, generous fellow, just the man to be imposed upon

and courted for what the designing could get out of him, with an almost inexhaustible stock of stories and reminiscences of the diggings, which he told with a rollicking native humour that made him the life and soul of the social evenings.

‘Now, Mason, just shake yourself a bit and rouse us up. We’re like a lot of mutes at a funeral. Tell us a good rousing yarn and help us to turn up the corners of our mouths.’

This rally on the part of Gradeley had no further effect than to evoke a shake of the head, then Mason picked up an illustrated and began to look at the pictures.

‘I think you will have to excuse him to-night; he has a very bad attack of the “blues,”’ Miss Prout explained.

‘If that is so,’ resumed Gradeley, ‘I have to propose, gentlemen, that we proceed to the ejection of the “blues” forthwith, which I think is a duty we owe both to ourselves and George. If we were down he would be the first to help to pick us up, so now I propose we at once begin to “paint the house red” as our Yankee friends would say, and so bury the “blues.”’

‘Here, here!’ was the general response.

‘You must do nothing of the kind. I won’t allow it,’ the lady remonstrated. ‘Do you forget that we have a ladies’ conference in the next room, and I must seriously request that you will do nothing to disturb them.’

‘Miss Prout, have you forgotten that this is Friday night and they should be requested not to disturb us? Besides, it is quite time all unprotected females were at home. They have been at it now for three hours and can’t have much more to say.’

‘Excuse me, Mr. Jordan, but may I ask if you are a married man?’ inquired Gradeley.

‘Thank Heaven, no!’

‘I thought not. Lucky fellow - I am! and when my wife has anything to say, it generally takes her about three hours to get through the preamble.’

‘And do you have to suffer it?’ inquired another. ‘I don’t wonder at your hair standing up, and your preference for London.’

This was met by a hearty laugh at Gradeley’s expense. ‘Hush, gentlemen, or I shall have to ask you to adjourn to another room.’

‘Miss Prout, will you allow me to propose that I should be installed in the chair for the evening?’ suggested Pawley; ‘perhaps I may be able to ensure such decorum as is requisite for the comfort of the ladies.’

There was a sound as of a rushing whistling wind, during which all the company pursed their lips.

‘Mr. Pawley - how dare you?’ and shook her head menacingly; though she had a most amusing difficulty to avoid laughing; ‘why, I would rather ask Mr. Gradeley than you.’

‘That just serves you right,’ cried Jordan. ‘I hope I shall never hear you call yourself one of Miss Prout’s favourites after that.’ Then most seriously to the lady, ‘But how is this, may I ask? Has he seriously misbehaved himself?’

‘Nothing more than usual - that is, nothing that I know of,’ she added with qualifying accentuation. ‘But I know he can be as full of mischief as an egg is full of meat if he once takes it into his head to be so. Mr. Gradeley was satisfied with proposing to paint the house red, but if Mr. Pawley began nothing short of vermilion would do for him.’

This turned the laugh against Ernest, but he was ready to retort.

‘And if the lady is allowed to continue she will give it a fairly brilliant hue presently.’

Now the hilarity was at the lady’s expense.

A moment later there was a nervous tap at the door and a timid voice was heard to say, -

‘Miss Whittaker will be pleased if the gentlemen will be as quiet as possible.’

The request was distinctly heard in the sudden silence caused by the slight opening of the door more than the scarcely audible rap, but the pantomimic grimaces of a dozen expectant ghostseers were ludicrous in the extreme. Still the door closed again and the threatened convulsion passed away, but a moment later Jordan was on his feet, and deliberately arranging himself in his most approved melodramatic attitude proceeded to address the assembly.

‘Gentlemen, I think you will agree with me that it would be politic on our part to bow to the inevitable. The powers that be have spoken, and because we are gentlemen I think I may rely upon your acceptance of the fact that it is impossible for us to be otherwise. Of course in this I make the proverbial exception in favour of Miss Prout, with whom we are all so well acquainted as to be assured, without further argument, that she could not be a gentleman if she made the unimaginable attempt. But returning from this trifling though necessary digression I would remind you that with a spontaneity thoroughly characteristic of our British nature, we had proposed to decorate this highly-appreciated abode according to a most effective, not to say gorgeous, design; but, gentlemen, with an equally characteristic spirit of

opposition and frustration of purpose, which we know from experience always arises from the undercurrents of millinery, we are reluctantly compelled to abandon our most philanthropic intentions and leave the worthy domicile in the musty, dusty - yes, I must say it, gentlemen - miserably shabby condition in which we found it. But because we are what we are we will not attempt to be otherwise, therefore we will lay aside at once our brushes, oils and pigments, and bow to the perversity which declares in favour of "the blues" against the more ruddy and glowing warmth we proposed. Now what remains? Are our hopes to be blighted, ruined, wrecked at the dictation of the conductor of one of those angelic choirs who haunt the regions above the attic? Are we to be cowed at the dictation of an invisible voice speaking through three inches of an open door? Most distinctly and emphatically I answer No! We are men of action, of resource, of determination, and I may also add of adaptability. Therefore, while in deference to the request we are compelled to abandon our many intentions and pursuits, we may, since imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, pay a still further tribute to our estimable oppressors by insisting on the gratification of our previous curiosity - which, if a failing, is still purely feminine and hence without objection - and call upon Miss Prout at once to explain the cause of the peculiarly colourable grievance or indisposition from which our friend Mason is suffering?'

The speech was well and duly punctuated with all the applause, assents, laughter and *et ceteras* it can be imagined to have called forth, and as the speaker resumed his seat an almost unanimous consent was given to his suggestion.

'I am not only surprised, but I am ashamed of you,' remonstrated the lady, whose manner so palpably contradicted her words as to call forth an additional chorus of laughter. Miss Whittaker was undoubtedly in the wrong, since she had engaged to terminate her meeting before the usual hour when the boarders assembled, and though Miss Prout was always anxious to oblige and assist all who came to her, the Friday reunions were too valuable in her estimation to be subordinated to any other arrangements. This had been fully explained to the lady president of the class, and though Miss Prout did not wish they should be unnecessarily disturbed she was not a little annoyed at the continuance of the meeting, though she did not admit so much to her 'boys.' 'But if Mr. Jordan wishes to know what is the matter with George,' she continued, 'why does he not ask him? I am not his father confessor.'

'Gentlemen, don't laugh, please. Miss Prout has a suggestion of Irish in her blood -'

'Oh, Mr. Pawley, how can you say so, when the lady has been a teetotaller for years,' remarked Tressey.

'I was simply explaining her bull, my friend, without any regard to her beverages. But putting all our fun aside, what is the matter with poor old George? Miss Prout, are you aware of anything? If so, please tell us whether we can do anything to help him.'

‘Of course there is something wrong with him, you may all see that; and, if I dared, I could also tell you what it is.’

‘Don’t do it, please,’ pleaded the poor fellow, who was at length roused to a state of serious concern by her admission.

‘George, I honestly believe I did wrong when I promised not to tell, and I think it would be for your good that I should break the promise.’

‘So do I,’ Tressey assented. ‘Let us know what it is, Miss Prout.’

‘Don’t, please; I shall be all right again to-morrow.’

‘To-morrow will be too late, George. And I believe I shall do you a great wrong if I respect your wish.’

‘It is evidently nothing of a very private nature,’ suggested Pawley, ‘and if it is anything concerning ourselves I think we ought to know.’

‘It concerns you personally,’ she remarked.

‘Don’t, Miss Prout, don’t, please! I can’t stand it.’ Then the tears overflowed and Mason broke down completely.

Pawley had already lost all trace of his light-heartedness - it was out of place in the presence of such tears - and with just a spasm of regret that he had already lost valuable time he turned to the lady and requested, -

‘If, as you say, it does concern me, I pray you let me know what it is at once, if possibly I can do anything for him.’

‘Yes, I will tell you; but you need not be anxious, Ernest, it is nothing more than a regret that you are going away to-morrow.’

‘Regret that I am going away!’ he replied with incredulous astonishment. And as he spoke he crossed to Mason and laid his hand affectionately upon his shoulder ‘Why, George, my poor friend, what possible difference can my going make to you? I have scarcely spoken to you half a dozen times since I came.’

‘That isn’t your fault’ - Then his grief again overcame him and he rose and left the room.

Pawley followed, and guiding him into one of the smaller rooms, knelt beside his chair and asked, -

‘Mason, my dear fellow, why is this, when I have had so little to do with you?’

Then he waited patiently, tenderly, while the paroxysm spent its force and the sorrow-stricken man calmed himself sufficiently to reply. Presently his attention was attracted by a small piece of string lying upon the hearthrug. He picked it up, and sitting with his elbows upon his knees, twisted the string between his fingers, and looking far away into vacancy spoke in a kind of reverie.

‘Some men think a lot of themselves because they can talk a bit, as if that was

everything - but it isn't. Many only make fools of themselves and hurt others when they try to say anything. Some are always talking, though they never say much; others say but very little, though they know how to get through a heap of business in doing it. No, you haven't said much to me, but you have done a lot more than you imagine. I knew how it would be - I told Miss Prout about it the day you came - because you are the moral of a Mr. Vianey I once met at the diggings, who saved me from going to hell long ago. I never once spoke to him until I held the stirrup for him to mount when leaving; but if ever God sent a man anywhere to save a poor devil's soul he came to our camp to save me. There was something about him that told me so when he first came, but I was ashamed of myself and got out of his way to prevent his speaking to me. But I couldn't rest if he was out of sight or hearing. I tried to drink, and the whisky choked me. I had to throw it away and go after him. I tried to play cards, but I could only think of him, and everybody laughed at my stupid mistakes. I couldn't work, so I threw my spade aside, and two whole days I managed to follow him like a dog without his knowing it. I was hungry to hear every word he said - they were more than all the gold in the colony to me. If ever I really prayed in my life it was that he would see me and speak to me; and yet if he had done so I should have run a mile because I knew I was such a contemptible scoundrel - but he had the only Something I wanted to make me a better man.' He paused in another temporary breakdown. All the men thought I was touched again with the "jim-jams," and to tell you the truth I never could quite recall all that happened. But when he said, "Good-bye, and may the Lord bless you," I was sane enough to feel that his prayer was answered, and I was a better man than ever I had been before. That blessing, those few words, kept me firm and sober for a whole month. Then I canted over again; but if he had only stopped I am sure he would have made a man of me. But there, what's the use of talking - a thousand God-forsaken devils such as I am aren't worth a thought from a man like him, and the sooner we are all done for the better.'

'Hush - sh! You must not say that. How can you be forsaken of God, if he and I were both sent to you? Do you know who he was?' he asked further, being anxious to keep the memory of one who had so influenced him actively in his thoughts.

'No, we did not know where he came from; but some of the chaps had met him at other camps, so we made up our minds that he spent his time going from one "location" to another. Some called him a preacher - but his was a very different kind of preaching to anything I ever heard. He wanted no pulpit, nor crowd, but used to get two or three - never more than four if he could help it, and sit down for a talk. He didn't say much about the Bible and religion, but wanted to know about the men themselves - what they were doing, if they had been successful, if they wanted anything and all like that. Then he would inquire where they came from, if they were married, had any children and how they were getting on at home. When he got so far he would start off to speak of home in a way I never heard the like of. Lord bless you, he made every man he spoke to homesick in less than five minutes, blasting the

damnation rock of a miner's life and striking the tear stream in every man Jack who heard him. No, I don't know who he was, but imagine he must ha' been an angel dropped clear down from heaven, to speak as he did. He managed to put the skid on the whole claim in the two days he was with us.'

'Did he travel alone?'

Pawley wished him to continue talking since it quieted him and was bringing him into a frame of mind that might prove serviceable.

'Yes - quite alone. But, bless you, he was safe enough. It's no fool of a man that can hold some of them miners up at sight, I can tell you; but I don't believe there was a man from one end of the colony to another who would have two thoughts about touching him. He was everybody's friend and you knew it the instant you saw him, and had he been fired on in the dark I believe the bullet would have found it out and turned aside. It was your likeness, to him, somehow, that gave me such a turn when I first saw you. I went all to pieces like, and you might ha' knocked me down with a straw. As soon as you left Miss Prout I went to her and told her all about it - that all her prayers and my sister's would be answered now, and I was glad to have you again - I didn't want to talk to you - but to have you round would help me to conquer the drink and save me. But - now -'

It was all over. He had swerved round until he stood face to face with his terrible temptation and the consciousness that again he would have to meet it alone. His vision of hope and help was again vanishing with the taunting fickleness of a mirage and nothing but despair remained unshaken. He wept as only strong men in such extremity can weep. But are not such tears in themselves eloquent with prayer? Shall they not prevail with Him who 'knoweth our frame - He remembereth that we are dust?' If the heartfelt cry of a publican is answered by a blessing, and that of a dying thief is crowned with a promise, shall not such a penitent wail also be heard and honoured by Him 'who is able to save to the uttermost'?

'The soul at times enjoys a liberation in communion by which it feels and prophetically realises the expansiveness or infinity of life - when limitless capabilities stretch away on every hand and we breathe the air of the eternities. It is thus invigorated, the vision brightens, the understanding unfolds until we rest wrapped in awesome wonder at the Omnipotent Divinity which sleeps within us. On the other hand there are times when we shrink appalled at our own impotence and less than weakness in the presence of the crushing oppositions which surround us. These are the sunshines of looking away or within, the glory presence of that Other or the disturbing shadow of our Self. We rise in the transfiguration of the contemplation and say, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,' but in the gloom of introspection we fall a prey to fear and only moan that we can do nothing.'

Pawley was no stranger to both these phases of spiritual experience, but - whether

due to his optimistic temperament or the strength of his faith - it was seldom he failed to push his way through the shadows into the compensating light beyond. So far in his interview with Mason his sympathies had been so completely absorbed in the grief of the man that he had himself failed to reach the freedom into which he longed to lead his friend, and for the moment he was confronted with the same sense of impotence to deal with the matters made him anxious to escape from the presence of Cox and his wife a few evenings before. In this case, however, the ground was already tilled and ready for the seed. The soul of Mason felt its need, its hunger, its dispiriting condition; his tears were cries for help to Him who feeds the sparrows and hears the famished raven's cry; and Pawley knew he had only to stand ready, for the answer would come and he must speak it.

'And now,' continued the weeping man, his voice tendered additionally pathetic by reason of the sobs which broke it, now - you are - going away! This is worse to me than ever! I - don't - know - what to do! Oh! my God, - help me! Help me! for I can't help myself!

'Amen,' Pawley responded fervently. He had at length found voice through Mason's prayer. The appeal to Heaven was answered, and the waiting disciple was filled with the inspiration of the reply.

'Rest there, my brother; let none disturb you and then all will be well. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." There was a calm confidence in the deliberate utterance of the exhortation and promise that seized hold on Mason, and quieted his agitation with the power of superhuman peace. Pawley was conscious of the awful Presence which overshadowed them - knew that the promise to be in the midst of two or three had again been redeemed, and his soul vibrated in harmony with the greater love by which they were encompassed round about. He knelt on holy ground - at the trystingplace God had appointed to meet returning prodigals. It was 'none other than the gate of heaven' where the light of the city fell full upon them, and its influence caused his voice to thrill with reverent adoration as the saintly Binney's must have thrilled when he sang: -

*'Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure that soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live, and look on Thee!'*

It was not the first time he had entered into such conscious relationship with the Invisible, but each time only increased the sense of his own unworthiness, but he was strengthened and upborne by the certainty that the Lord was mindful of his servant, therefore He trusted and his faith 'was heard in that he feared.' His cheeks

were pallid by reason of his two-fold emotion, but a strange super-normal transparency suffused his face as if the light of God shone through him in confirmation of the words he had to speak, and taking Mason once again in a brotherly embrace, each buried his face on the other's shoulder while Pawley spoke 'as the Spirit gave him utterance.'

'You must conquer heaven if you lie where you have fallen - stretched helpless upon your own cross, at the mercy of the habits that are crucifying your soul, acknowledging your own inability, and looking away to God for help, while you open your hands to let your old life drop away. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This is the Father's promise, accept it, and wait just where you are for His deliverance. You have reached your own extremity - you feel and know it is impossible to help yourself, and it is just here where God's opportunity steps in. He must and will come to your deliverance now, or be untrue to Himself - and that can never be. He will come - has come. Yes, George, though in your distress you are not aware of it, I know He is here, and so long as you are true He will never leave you nor forsake you. Let your impotence rest upon His omnipotence, then you need not fear, but put no trust in men, for the best of us are weak and helpless as yourself. God alone is able to deliver and keep you. Your Australian friend had to go away from you in order that he might speak to and influence others; I must also leave you because my next duty lies in Cottominster; but God and Christ are able to abide with you to the end. You cannot understand how Christ can be more than men, because you lack the experience through which the knowledge comes. You are like a young plant raised from a seed in the narrow limits of a flower pot; when the time for its transplanting comes, and it feels the familiar earth loosen around its roots, it shrinks, trembles, and feels that it is sure to die; in its new position it is strange and weak and languishing, because its roots have not yet accommodated themselves nor answered to the new attractions that woo and are about to nourish it into a fuller life. So it is with you, in this great transition - you fear because you do not understand. Trust the Gardener, George; trust the Gardener, for He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. I know where one great hindrance to your peace comes in just now; it lies in the fact that so many who "profess" the name of Christ are no better for doing so.' Pawley paused an instant for the assent conveyed in a tightening of the embrace alone. 'Don't let that stand in your way, my friend. An expert in gems would never deny the existence of stones because the great mass of jewellery only consists of paste. There are gems for those who will pay the price, and there is also the "power of Christ unto salvation" for those who will make the sacrifice by which it is acquired. They who reach this become "living epistles read and known of all men.' Wherever Christ is He cannot be hid, for His presence shines through the disciple and all men are drawn unto Him. You tell me that the moment that you and others saw Mr. Vianey you knew he was a friend; he attracted you, drew you after him, and spake as you never heard any preacher speak before. He possessed the Something you felt you wanted, and when

he went away all the light went out of your life. When you saw me you thought he had come back again, and your hope revived; now I am going away, your despair returns. George, my likeness to him is not of the body, but he and I are companions of the same Master - we have been with Jesus - with Him we have eaten of that Bread of life for which your hungry soul is crying. You will remember that when Mary saw Him in the half light of the resurrection morning she mistook Him for the gardener; you are just falling into the same error on your resurrection morning - it is not Vianey or me, but rather the "Christ in us" who is your all in all. You doubt it, my brother, but I speak the truth - your fear is only that of the plant at the thought of transplanting. Or let me use another illustration which will appeal more forcibly to your understanding. When you first reached the mines you were dissatisfied, felt yourself deceived, and wished yourself back again. Why? Because the country, the work, and the men were strange, and the influences of home were strong upon you. But presently you got used to the climate, came to understand the work, and made one or two friends among the men. With these the home-sickness passed away and presently Australia became far preferable to England. Now just what you experienced at that time - the doubts, suspicions and certainties that life at the "fields" had been misrepresented - will naturally be repeated in this much more important step which is for your eternal welfare. There is no argument you can apply to Australia which is not valid here, for "he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

'Not to me, Mr. Pawley, not to me!' and the poor fellow rolled his head to and fro in the hopelessness of his despair. 'You don't know what I have been - what I am even now.'

'Neither is it necessary that I should know. If you were ill, dying of some malignant disease, it would not be necessary for me to understand the history of your case before I called in a doctor. But if I had suffered a similar affliction and had found a doctor with a specific for your complaint, I might assist you by my advice and calling in his aid. George, my friend, it matters not in what stage your disease may be - incipient or final - "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved" than that of Jesus Christ, "who is able to save to the uttermost." It was the instinctive recognition of this supreme fact that attracted you to Mr. Vianey, because you *knew* he possessed the Something that was able to save you. The consciousness of this was the same as that which makes a flower turn to the sun or a stranded fish struggle back towards the water; they know, though they cannot reason, that life, freedom and salvation is there. So it is Christ you need, and when once you can distinguish His voice in mine speaking to you, you will enter a new world of experience, be born again, become another man with added power and capabilities you can neither understand nor imagine before He unfolds them in you. You will be lifted into another state of existence, transferred from this waiting-room into the audience-chamber of God, where the spiritual part of you will become as real as the physical is now - the boundary land where communion with Heaven will

be opened and remain as natural as with earth. I know I am speaking strange things in your ears, but I am telling you the truth; “great is the mystery of godliness,” and “few there be who enter in” to the knowledge and possession thereof. The true conversion of the soul is not a dogma mysteriously and inexplicably enshrined in the words “I believe,” it is an actual passage from “death unto life,” and is accompanied by all the energising and vital characteristics of the resurrection. It is a death to Self followed again by a rising in Christ in the process of which we are lost, but our lives are hid with Christ in God. We shall live, and yet not we but Christ lives in us; we are henceforth temples of the Holy Ghost, and enter into the promised earnest of our sonship with God “He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also.” This is our evidence to the world, the fruit of our discipleship, the which you saw in Vianey and followed him because in him you had found the Lord Christ. What your friend was, George, is just what the waiting Master is anxious to make of you, if you are willing to let the past go and trust Him for the future. The decision is in your hands, and yours alone. He asks you to-night as He asked the impotent man, “Wilt thou be made whole?” The answer and responsibility are yours, the power is His. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” Is not this enough? And the waiting Saviour adds this assurance, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

Pawley had finished, and knowing in the rapture of his soul’s clear vision that the Master he loved was with them, he bowed his head still lower while in the silence the Bread of Life was broken for that hungry soul to eat. Who can picture with what suspense the eyes of Heaven contemplate such a scene as the recording angel wings his flight upwards with the cry – ‘Behold! he prayeth.’

The silence was over. Pawley drew the trembling prodigal closer to him, and with an almost whispering voice sang: -

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer’s ear;

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds

And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,

It calms the troubled breast;

'Tis manna to the hungry soul

And to the weary rest.'

Then another pause fell like a benediction, and Mason, gently loosening himself, without another word rose and left the room.

Pawley still knelt - he was with his Master and satisfied.

Chapter IV – A Proposal

When Pawley presently returned to the ordinary sitting-room he found no one but Gradeley and Tressey, who were reading; the former immediately laid his book aside and, discreetly ignoring the thought uppermost in their minds, inquired,-

‘Are you really leaving us to-morrow, Mr. Pawley?’

‘Yes, I must be home for Sunday.’

‘You should certainly hear Liddon and Spurgeon before you go,’ suggested Tressey.

‘London has far greater attractions for me than even Liddon or Spurgeon,’ he replied, ‘but I must be home for Sunday in spite of all.’

‘That’s where the intolerable nuisance of a wife comes in,’ Gradeley returned irritably. He invariably resolved every annoyance into his own peculiar cross. ‘By thunder, I believe it is impossible for a woman to be comfortable unless she knows she is spoiling a man’s enjoyment!’

‘But life makes higher claims upon us than enjoyment.’

‘Perhaps so; but I’m not so confoundedly fond of argument as to discuss that matter now. I’m d---d mad, and it’s no use disguising it.’

‘Why?’ he asked laconically.

‘Because I have been carefully working out a scheme all the week, and your going tomorrow blows it to the wind.’

‘I’m truly sorry, but you know’ - and his face brightened into a pleasant, roguish smile - ‘there is always a way out of every difficulty if we will only try to find it.’

‘Then prove your predicate and stop till Monday. For more than one reason I should not be altogether sorry to do so, but - “there’s no place like home.”

‘I don’t know that. If your wife was like mine and thought it her duty to go “spouting” all over the country, and was never at home when she could go elsewhere, you would perhaps have another opinion.’

‘I am sorry for you if such is the case; and all the more so since my wife believes it to be her first duty to make home my greatest attraction.’

‘What! greater than even a change in London?’ asked Tressey.

‘Yes; greater than a dozen Londons, if you can imagine that. My home is an attraction without a rival. You smile, but let me try to prove it to you. This morning,’ and he took a number of letters from his pocket, of which he selected one, ‘I received a letter from my wife which closes as follows: -

“I wonder if you are wanting to see me as much as I am longing for your return?”

The days seem so weary without you, and when night comes I am always conjuring up the idea of something happening to prevent you ever being at my side again. When you are away from me it seems as if I have not sufficiently appreciated your presence - so keen is my sense of your loss. Do make haste, my dearest, and get your business done, for I really believe I only live when you are with me. I watch the clock, and as each hour passes, I think it is one less to live through before my precious one comes home, and I hold again in my arms all that makes life worth living. Now I know you will smile at this and say, 'Bless her darling heart,' but you know you feel just as bad, and if you could, would start off at once and come home to your own loving and devoted wife,

ELINOR."

'Now, gentlemen,' he continued as he replaced the letter, 'I ask you honestly if you would prefer to stop in London or answer such an epistle personally?'

'Ah, Pawley, you are only in the simpleton stage if you can't read between the lines of such letters as that. Send the woman a cheque for ten pounds - that's the thing that makes a woman's life worth living - and she won't care whether you go home tomorrow or tomorrow month - that is, unless she wants more money.'

'Don't be so cynical, Gradeley,' Tressey retorted; 'I don't know much - '

'Then show your wisdom by saying nothing.'

'But I am in the land of free speech, my friend, and of an opinion that even an open cheque would not satisfy the writer of such a letter. Mr. Pawley, you are a fortunate man to possess such a wife after - how many years of married life?'

'Seven, and only just reaching the sweeter stage of our courtship.'

'I envy you.'

'I envied every married fool at one time; but when the vinegar upset into our romantic syrup I learned that I was the greatest fool after all. But seriously, Pawley, I want to have a chat with you on business matters, and counted on Sunday afternoon for the purpose. Can't you stay?'

'No sir, it is impossible. If it suits you I will hear anything you choose to say now, but I am off in the morning.'

'You take me at a disadvantage. It is a matter in which I am not alone concerned that I am anxious to consult you about; and making sure you would stop we have only arranged preliminaries at present, and have to work out details tomorrow.'

'You can write to me.'

'Oh, that's impossible. It would take us a year, and if anything is to be done it must be within a month.'

‘Well, let me hear the outline of the matter if you think my opinion is of any value.’

‘It’s not an opinion I want; but a proposal I have to make.’

‘Well, proceed with the outline of the idea. Perhaps that may be all that is necessary.’

‘I hope to goodness it will be nothing of the kind, but if I have either to shoot at a running stag or miss my shot, here goes.’

He then went on to explain how in the execution of his present commission he had naturally been brought into connection with the principal authorities and critics in the world of art, and among them particularly with the world-famed Michael Harleston, editor of the *Fine Arts’ Mirror*, with whom he had already entered into a provisional arrangement which was certainly, as every other change had originally been, the one great opportunity in Gradeley’s career.

Some twelve months previously the somewhat eccentric and philanthropic Lord Shenstone had called upon Harleston, after reading one of the editor’s stories of life in the Scottish Highlands, in the hope of devising some plan whereby part of his lordship’s enormous fortune might be utilised in the amelioration of grievances set forth in the romance. Presently the determination was arrived at to establish a periodical to be known as the ‘*Workman’s Register*’, in which all necessary reforms were to be discussed and advocated. The programme was a wide one, so was the clientele to which it was proposed to appeal. His lordship would bear the financial responsibility, which the well-informed Harleston assured him would prove to be a sinecure in its outlay but a veritable gold-mine in its reward; Harleston’s household name would appear as editor-in-chief, and he had recently come to the conclusion that there was no man in God’s wide earth it would give him so much pleasure to work with in the deputy editorial chair as his newly-discovered friend Frederic Reynolds Gradeley.’

The only difficulty hitherto experienced in carrying out the project had been to find a business manager who would be equally congenial, and Gradeley had come to the conclusion that this would be solved in the person of Pawley. Harleston was convinced of the excellency of his deputy’s judgment, and, as we have said, the morrow had been fixed for the final consideration of the matter before Pawley was approached.

‘Such is only the bare outline of the proposal I shall have to make. Now, don’t you think it advisable to stop in town till Monday?’

‘No! I don’t see how it would help matters at all. The offer is certainly a great temptation, but -’

‘Don’t let us have any “buts” about it. It is yours if you will only say “Yes.”’

‘I thoroughly believe that, and whether I do eventually accept it or not, I wish at

once most heartily to thank you for the honour you have done me in making the proposal. But such a step is one I cannot lightly or rashly decide upon. I have my wife, my present employers, and also my God to consult before I give my answer.'

'Those considerations would not long keep me in doubt. I should come to my decision something in this way. My wife's duty is to obey, not counsel; my employer would consider his own interest, and I shall do the same; and as to God - well, when He allows one of the "plums" of life to be offered to me, I naturally think He intends me to take it!'

'But your ideas and mine do not always run parallel,' replied Pawley, with a slightly mischievous smile. My wife is my better half, not my slave, she has an equal interest in life as myself, and since she helps me bear its burdens she has an equal right to be consulted in the changes I make. My employers have always been most considerate towards me, and have a right to demand the same in return. As for God, I am His steward, not my own master, and I can neither accept nor refuse until I know His will.'

'I am older than you, Pawley, and have perhaps seen more of the ways of the world,' Gradeley answered, chafing at the thought of a woman being allowed to interfere where he was concerned, and I tell you you will lose this thing while your wife is fooling over it.'

Then that would be God's clear indication to me that I was not to take it,' he replied calmly. So far my wife has been my best counsellor, and I can do nothing without her advice. But you have no need to be disturbed; our lives are ordered for us step by step, and the decision rests with One higher than ourselves. If God has a work for me to do in London He will open the way for me to come, if not I had better remain where I am. When you have seen Mr. Harleston - unless you then change your minds - I should be glad if you will put your proposal in writing, stating when you would need my services, if I accept, and such other details as are necessary, and I will consider it at once. I don't think I shall keep you long in suspense.'

'Is that your decision so far?'

'That is all I can say for the present.'

'Very well. I am disappointed, but I will see that you are written to to-morrow.'

Then, without a word about Mason, they bade each other 'Good-night' and retired.

Chapter V - Employer And Servant

The platform of Cottominster Railway Terminus presented an unusually bright and animated scene. The city has a proverbial reputation for being smoky, dull and wet, with a disposition to wrap a thick, moist brown atmosphere around its

shoulders, through which the sun is only permitted to penetrate at long intervals and then only in fitful, accidental spasms. Its suburbs are belted with a wide circle of spinning mills and textile manufactories, with which houses of pretension refuse to associate, since the sound of their wheels and looms fall upon the ear like the ceaseless echoes of some distant inferno. The citizens, naturally affected by climatic surroundings, lack the sprightly vivacity of less industrial centres, but possess weight, fidelity and a kindly heartedness which fully compensates for many shortcomings in the climate for the latter of which the citizens are not altogether responsible.

But today is one of the rare exceptions. The sun, as if jealous of his reputation and weary of his long series of defeats through the winter, has shaken his locks, opened his shoulders, and by fierce onslaught carried the position and made it evident to a rejoicing Cottominster that spring is coming.

It is almost a festival day with the ladies, who, with scarcely credulous confidence, venture to display new costumes and millinery. It is Saturday, too, and the city offices being already closed, a regular army of clerks have opportunity to parade in attendance on the gentler sex, and all the eccentric brigades of dudedom rise to the occasion and contribute of their grotesques to diversify the scene.

The general rendezvous on such occasions is the one promenade the city affords with any degree of safety in the uncertain climate - the railway platform; and the train presently due is the most popular London express of the day. It brings the first possible replies to last night's correspondence, leaves town at a time to allow ladies to breakfast comfortably, and also makes important cross connections *en route*. Then, as we have said, it is Saturday, consequently the train will be lengthened at least by one additional carriage to accommodate returning commercials, who are always met by clerks and porters, but under the glorious circumstances of the day are now awaited by far more congenial companions.

'Bai Jove, Tommy!' exclaimed a most pronounced collar to a twin pair of cuffs beside him, 'what price the brown and white, eh?'

'She looks deucedly fwesh, old chappie; don't twy it. You'll only come a cwopper.'

'Two cigarettes I don't.'

'Two you do.'

'Done!'

And two right-hand gloves touched each other after the most approved dandified fashion, then the gallant prepared to win his smoke.

The lady who provoked this desperate wager had already attracted the attention of a hundred pairs of eyes during the ten minutes she had quietly paced the platform; not that there was anything particularly distinctive in her claim to beauty, not was she pronounced or striking in the matter of attire. Slightly below the

medium height, with a pleasant face scarcely disturbed in its placidity by the ripple of a smile, and looking well below the number of her years, she was certainly well modelled, compact, and just sufficiently rounded to be plump without a suggestion of embonpoint. In the study she demanded one could not escape the idea of a modest desire to conceal - or at least evade - the exhibition of certain pronounced qualities which sat so gracefully and regally upon her. Prompt, definite, self-contained, unobtrusive but self-reliant were qualities not to be denied in her, however she might dress herself down with a view of softening the fact; and these were well accompanied by cautiousness and forethought, which were equally displayed in her attire. She offered her welcome to spring in a rich brown alpaca princess gown prettily piped and faced with cream, but her nervous distrust of winter was quite as plainly indicated in a short open plush jacket with sable collar and cuffs. Her headgear consisted of a closely-fitting straw hat, velvet trimmed, over which was carelessly thrown an ostrich feather, its tip nestling in coils of brown hair threaded with gold. At her throat was fastened a simple bow of pink ribbon by a lover's knot brooch, and the sketch is completed by the umbrella with which she tapped the toe of her petite boot as she walked the platform, wistfully looking toward the distant curve of the line.

'The train will be a good five minutes yet, miss; it's only just signalled,' said a porter as she reached the end of the platform.

'Thank you,' she responded kindly, then turned and unconsciously faced the gambler.

He beheld his fate approaching with no small amount of nervousness, and at once proceeded to assume his most fetching manner. Cuffs were ostentatiously shot out, arms carefully settled into the sleeves of his coat, collar ceremoniously adjusted, spats shaken into the requisite prominence, and the dust flicked from his patent leathers. Now the innocent cause of his perturbation was at hand, and assuming his most insipid smile he raised his hat.

'Afternoon, miss; may I ask if you are waiting for anyone?'

She neither paused nor started, but gave him a withering glance of contempt that ran like an electric shock from his hat to his boots.

'Yes, for a gentleman,' she answered and passed on leaving him first to the ridicule of the bystanders and then to settle the wager.

As the train ran into the station Pawley's eye caught sight of the feather-crowned hat, and a few moments later the expected 'gentleman' heard the lips of the distinguished lady murmur an almost inaudible 'My love,' before he had time to stop them with a kiss.

'Shall we take a cab?' she queried, as soon as he had secured his luggage. 'I want you all to myself for a little while, and in a 'bus you will find half a dozen people to talk to.'

'Of course we will - two if you wish it,' he replied facetiously.

'But I don't wish it, you stupid; that would be worse than a 'bus.'

So Ernest hailed a cab and they drove homeward, happy as a honeymoon couple who felt that necessary separation was over at last and they were all in all to each other. Words are but a feeble mode of expression in the times of such re-unions, when souls have been drawn together and welded in the crucible of years of married life. Each has learned to know and understand the other, and the summer love flower is more beautiful, sweet and fragrant beyond comparison with the exotic of the spring. Both hearts were happy, their lips were mute, while their hands caressed and clasped each other.

When tea was over, and the children were weary of their toys as well as their romp with papa, Elinor took them to bed, then placed her husband comfortably in her own chair, brought a footstool, drew his arm around her waist, and rested her head lovingly against his shoulder.

'Does this mean that you are now ready to hear all about the Great City?' he inquired.

'No, my darling, not that - just yet. I am not anxious to exchange you for business so soon.'

'God bless you,' and he lifted her head to take another kiss. 'I am in no hurry, dear; but I don't want you to think I am tired.'

'Don't let us speak of business to-night,' she pleaded. 'I have been without you since Monday week, and I want you all to myself to-night.'

'All to yourself, darling, to-night and for ever.'

'For ever, Ernest?' and she turned her large hazel eyes upwards full of the confidence of unwavering faith. Yes, my own, for ever; and you know it.'

She made no reply save by a half-unconscious nodding of her head, which swung to and fro with the imperturbable regularity of a Chinese image, while her eyes looked vacantly into the fire, and she seemed to be listening to something falling - falling; down - down, as her head kept time to the acquiescence bounding from point to point, each intonation growing softer, softer, until they were lost in the unfathomable depths of her soul. Then she quietly laid her head again upon his shoulder and re-commenced her dream.

'Ernest,' she asked presently, her hand stealing affectionately over his cheek, do you think that heaven can possibly be sweeter than this?'

'I do not know, neither do I care to speculate on such a matter just now; I am too satisfied. You used to ask that same question before we were married.'

'Yes, I remember,' and her voice sounded like one still in a dream.

'How do these days compare with those?' he inquired.

‘Why, my darling, one of these is worth a thousand of those,’ she replied roused to a degree of animation by the inquiry.

‘May it not be possible for heaven to be just as much in advance of this? I don’t see how it can, but “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” But this I do know, my love, that just as this is enough for now heaven will be enough for then.’

‘Oh, dear!’ and she breathed a languid sigh, but I should like to know all about it.’

‘I have no doubt you would, my love,’ he answered as he lovingly pressed the little brown head more closely to his breast, and millions before you have wished the same; but I have an idea that when Paul said the possibility of such a conception had not entered into the heart of man he intended it to include women also, therefore I am afraid you will be compelled to wait. In the meantime are you not satisfied?’

‘I am grateful, dear - how could I be otherwise for all the blessings God has showered upon us - but I am not sure it is possible to be satisfied. I don’t think God intends me to be until “I awake with His likeness”’

‘When will that be Elinor?’ he asked with a longing far-away inquiry as if his soul had suddenly sprang forward into the eternities and spoke from the still disappointed distance. ‘I know it will - must come, but sometimes I grow impatient in my desire to reach it; then the way seems long and the shadows almost make me fear.’

‘Hush, my lad; don’t conjure up any gloomy doubts to-night.’ Then, suddenly lifting her head as if at the impulse of a cloud across her own vision, she asked, ‘But what makes you speak like that? Has anything gone wrong anywhere?’

‘No, darling, nothing! It is rather the reverse, for never had I a more propitious future stretching before me to all appearance than I have at this moment. But I had a most remarkable experience soon after leaving London, and I am not able to get rid of the influence of it.’

‘What was it, dear? Tell me.’

She moved a trifle closer, and drawing his hand from her head to her shoulder held it and prepared to listen.

‘When we started I settled myself in the corner of the carriage with the intention of reading; there were only three in the compartment, but somehow my thoughts were more with you than in sympathy with the news’ - this admission was acknowledged by a spasmodic squeeze of the hand and a furtive glance from her happy eyes - ‘so directly after leaving Willesden I threw the paper aside. I closed my eyes, but never for an instant did I sleep, and constantly took precaution to assure myself of the fact. Still I had scarcely time to quiet myself before I was conscious that in some mysterious manner I was going away. To say I was astonished is but a very mild term to express my feelings, yet I was neither nervous nor alarmed; I was much

more pleased and gratified, and being perfectly collected used, but very fruitlessly, my best endeavours to discover the why and wherefore of such a strange phenomenon. I recalled how, as a child, I had frequently dreamed of a double self, the one of which was continually wandering from the other, and taking part in all kinds of impossible romances; but, as I tell you, I was not asleep this morning, and to be certain about it I opened my eyes, saw we were passing Watford and in an instant we dashed into the tunnel. I returned to my - vision shall I call it? with a firm determination to solve the riddle, but I failed to reach any other satisfaction than John's definition of perhaps a similar experience, which he speaks of as "being in the spirit." It is vague, abstract, and unsatisfactory, but being unable to do anything better I have to leave it at that for the present in the hope that it may be repeated and I shall then reach a more definite conclusion. As I arrived at this point of my inquiry the engine screamed and we passed Blechley. Still, though I noticed this, the thread of my experience was not broken, and relinquishing any further attempt at solution I turned my attention to its subject matter. I could see the train steaming along and myself - or my body as you will - comfortably resting in the corner of the carriage, but I was in some way standing within or upon another world as real, tangible and matter-of-fact as this. I don't know whether you are able to understand me, but I am at a loss to explain myself more clearly.'

'Go on,' she murmured, taking advantage of his appeal to change her position, resting her chin upon her hands and looking through the fire with all her keen soul in her eyes.

I was standing in a magnificently charming landscape amid the awfully solemn forces from which Being is generated. I felt everywhere the consciousness of the infinite around me in which omnipotence was unfolded and incontrovertibly demonstrated. I realised and was able to appreciate this by virtue of powers and faculties I possess, which in those surroundings spontaneously asserted and employed themselves, but now they have retired within me, and I am far too weak to reach and move them. But in their presence I knew and understood that I had been lifted up and introduced into the workshop - the laboratory of God. Before me somewhere - but being void of any sense of distance I cannot say where - I saw a pavilion from which proceeded an influence nourishing and sustaining every new and unknown impulse by which I was actuated. And I was intuitively certain that in that same pavilion the secret of the mystery of life was hidden; there was enshrined the final satisfaction, the great consummation of each individual soul. As I looked wistfully towards that great goal of universal inquiry it exerted a power over me I reluctantly resisted, yet I longed for the revelation it only had the power to make. But the presence of it awed me where I stood, and the sacred mystery held me still irresolute. What would not earth give to learn the secret therein contained? Was not the vision the voice of God calling me to learn the Truth - self-evident - for which all men are groping? Was not my presence in that mysterious region the clothing of my Self with a mantle of responsibility I might not lay aside? Could I possibly resist

impulse to draw near, no matter what might intervene, and yet escape the condemnation of unfaithfulness? These and many other thoughts passed before me as I stood and pondered, and as they passed each paused as if demanding a reply. I looked earthward and the rattle of the train grated on my ears like the irritating discord of a selfish, struggling world, in its madness breaking the laws and setting the will of God at defiance - and the secret of yonder pavilion would be able to bring peace and concord out of all the strife. Again I opened my eyes. The spires of Lichfield Cathedral stood in the place of the pavilion; the work of man had usurped the position of the palace of God. I shuddered. This was no phantasy of a dream. My soul was up in arms, crying for the cathedral to give place to the pavilion once again. With my eyes wide open the vision impinged upon, nay, it was overflowing, the normal, for the great edifice was melting before my eyes and the august shekinah was rising upon my sight, as the resolute queries of the vision called back for my replies. What did it mean? What should I do? I had been brought for some mysterious, unfathomable reason to a momentous parting of the ways of life. A decision was in my hands for good or ill, the issues of which were represented by the vastness of the forces which lay in infinite potentialities around me. I closed my eyes. "Who is sufficient for these things?" was the cry of my still undecided soul. And above me hovered a voiceless, invisible presence awaiting my resolve. I could not endure the suspense. I was weak and unworthy, but the God who called me knew and understood all about it. That was enough. I bowed my head and cried, "Not my will but Thine be done." Then I had strength and at once stepped towards the pavilion. "Whither would'st thou go?" asked the Invisible. "To learn the mighty secret of the pavilion that I may publish it to earth," I answered. "But this is not the way," he said; "go back again to earth, the key by which its door is opened is there, and shall be given to him who shall be perfected through suffering, and thus made worthy to receive it," While he was speaking the engine screamed again, and a few moments later we stopped at Crewe.'

'What a marvellously strange experience!' exclaimed Elinor, after a considerable pause. 'What do you think it means, dear?'

'My darling, God must be His own interpreter in that. The secret at present lies with Him, but I have no doubt we shall know presently; but you can understand how its influence still hangs around me.'

'It is strangely consonant with a verse of Miss Havergal's that was in my mind when I woke this morning. But I naturally attributed mine to your coming home.'

'What was it, dear?'

'You know the words well enough. It was just those lines: -

*"Near after distant, gleam after gloom,
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony rapture of bliss,*

Right was the pathway leading to this."

'But now I want my lad to forget all about everything but me. That is,' she added with a coy archness, 'unless you think the "perfected through suffering" had any reference to myself.'

'I shall not be afraid to take that risk, love; and if the suffering is to come from you alone I am afraid I shall not be very highly perfected.'

So the evening passed. Elinor had her wish, for no mention of business was allowed to cloud her happiness.

With the morning Gradeley's promised letter arrived, the voluminous contents of which Ernest carefully read before he sat down to breakfast. In its length and attention to detail he clearly caught a sidelight upon, not only the writer's, but also Harleston's determination to secure a favourable reply. And when he thought of the position of the latter, he was flattered but at the same time humbled as he asked himself why God should thus remember him.

Having finished and grasped the contents of the epistle, over their meal he proceeded to lay the matter fully before his wife, who listened patiently with a thankful heart that at length a hopeful break had come in the clouds of her husband's fortune, and his true value had been recognised and appreciated. Not that Elinor had made up her mind to advise an acceptance of the proposition at once - her nature was too prudent and cautious to jump at such conclusions however bright and tempting the prospect might appear. Her impetuous husband might, had often been imposed upon, to his loss, regret and hindrance to success; but she was always suspicious that man-traps might be set even in the sunlight, and she did not care to stall her horse until she had first examined the stable. Her joy was that such a man as Harleston should so appreciate the qualities she knew her husband to possess as to be willing - even anxious - to bring him into such close relationship with himself. The consciousness of so great appreciation was as much happiness as she could accommodate at one time, and till she had somewhat accustomed herself to the presence of it, she was positively unable to spare a thought to the greater question of which her joy was only the bright reflection.

Home possessed a greater attraction for Pawley than chapel that morning, and his service was one of truly paternal love and thanksgiving with his little ones, who made the house frequently to echo with the lustiness of their jubilate.

Domestic duties sat lightly upon the shoulders of Elinor that day; heart and voice were full of song, and ever and anon she interrupted some portion of the children's programme to steal a kiss and take her husband in her arms again just to make sure she was not dreaming. And all the time her busy mind was running backward and forward along the life road by which he had travelled. She had made him tell the story of his early years so many times that she seemed to know it as if she had been by his side all the way, and seeing how they had now grown into each other's life she

wondered how he ever managed to get along without her, with that simple, trusting, easy-going nature of his - how was it he had never fallen into the destroying influences of the world? Surely God must have given His angels charge concerning him, and he had been borne up in their hands, for only so could he have been protected. Why? Was not such a preservation a practical declaration that God had some definite - perhaps unique - work for him to accomplish? The history of Ernest's early years stood like a monumental recognition of God's guiding hand. For what? God never acts without a purpose, and signal mercies, in His will, are destined to proceed and produce equally signal services. Surely this was the lesson that those early years foretold? And while she worked she sang:

‘Choose for us, Lord, nor let our weak preferring
Cheat our poor souls of good Thou halt designed:
Choose for us, Lord, Thy wisdom is unerring,
And we are fools and blind.’

Then came the day when his sister had introduced them to each other at the Sunday school, when their lives co-mingled, and from which time she was able to speak of his career from her own observation. In this the evidence of the overshadowing and directing power of God stood out with clearer prominence - so it appeared to her - than had been possible in earlier years. They had been times of seclusion, away back in the recesses, out of the rush and turmoil of life comparatively; but these had been years in which he had come from his unknown and unrecognised condition in an attempt to do something in spite of the difficulties he had found in his way, to take his place, handicapped as he was, in the battle of life, in which he had determined to do a manly part or fall. These years she knew had been very heavy with heartbreaking misunderstanding, misrepresentation, jealousy and intrigue, secret whisperings and baseless, covert slanders, which made life's burden at times almost intolerable, and allowed no rest, no peace, no quiet. But behind all this there had been a directing, controlling and restraining Hand, plucking the sting from calumnies and breaking the power of designing machinations, so that he had gone forward in the face of his enemies. Was it the reflex action of all this that had unconsciously come to him in his journey yesterday, and in the hush between the cross of the past and the crown the future appeared to hold, he had been mysteriously assured that the battle was over, the 'perfection through suffering' had been attained, and henceforth he would reap the just reward of his fidelity in the past? Sterling worth, such as her husband possessed above the great multitude of men, must perforce compel recognition in time, and in all the world she could not imagine a more appropriate source for such to reach him through than the great Michael Harleston.

But we must not follow these extravagant love musings of Elinor any further. As

her husband had assured Tressey, they were at present only in the full deep stream of their courtship, and such times are not congenial to calm philosophy, nor are the estimates lovers form of each other entirely free from the imaginations of romantic idealism, however prudent and cool-headed the authority may be upon other matters.

Still, behind all these possible false estimates and natural mistakes, arising from the tenderness of faithful love, the Pawleys had their great shield and protection in their resolute confidence in God. And when again night came round, they came together to quietly and prayerfully consider the way they should take; leaning her head again upon the dear pillow of her love, her husband's shoulder, Elinor thrilled his heart as well as her own as she sang the prayer: -

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on!

The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step enough for me.'

Neither spoke for a space as the echo of the song' died away. Then Ernest said, -

'We must wait for that guidance, my darling. Till the pillar of fire or cloud goes forward we must be content to stand still.'

It was Monday morning. Ernest had several times assured himself that he had all his papers in his handbag, had donned his light overcoat; Elinor had brushed his hat, and he held her in his arms for a last kiss.

'Well, little woman, what am I to do?'

She shook her head doubtfully.

'I don't know. My mind is a perfect blank so far. Don't say anything to-day unless you are compelled; but if you are, God is still able to guide you, dear, and we must trust Him.'

With this they parted, and Ernest went into the city where a warm welcome and hearty congratulations were waiting him.

'By gad, Pawley!' exclaimed Mr. Severn, his principal, jumping from the chair and hurrying to grasp his hand before he could close the door, the sight of you does me good, and lifts a nightmare from my mind that has troubled me ever since you went away. How are you? Come and sit down and tell me all you have done.'

And Pawley, not a whit less pleased to meet his chief, returned the congratulations with equal warmth and sincerity.

'Of what have you been apprehensive, sir?' he asked, removing his coat and taking the proffered chair.

‘That those devils in London would find you out and entrap you. By gad, I made sure I had lost you, and was two or three times half persuaded to come after you.’

The cloud had moved at length and the shadow of its passing fell across Pawley’s face. He had to speak - there was no escaping it. He proceeded at once to lay the whole facts unreservedly before Mr. Severn, and finally gave him the letter he had received from Gradeley.

The interview was a long one and in a certain sense painful to both. In the four years Pawley had been associated with the Gazette he had proved himself to be no ordinary self-seeking servant, but one of those rare exceptions - sadly too few in commercial life - who considered his own interests to be identical with those of his employer. Through this he had won appreciation, and the spirit of his guiding principle had been reflected from his chief back to himself. Severn was a shrewd Northcountry man of the world, who had commenced life under very similar circumstances to Pawley and risen by the strength of his own endeavours and exertions, therefore he was able to understand and appreciate the efforts of a servant whose transparent conduct and untiring energies had been so freely placed at the disposal of his position. He was not blind to the fact that his value would some day be discovered and such a consequence as the present would inevitably arise unless a provision was previously devised to frustrate the proposal. And to do him justice it must be stated that he had already seriously contemplated giving Pawley an interest in his new journal with the object of so doing. But the finalities had been too long delayed, the success which was to bring about the climax of the intention had previously produced an offer of even greater advantage. Severn knew this, and he was too honest and straightforward to make any attempt to under-rate it.

‘It’s a long time since I suffered such a knock back as this,’ he said when the matter had been thoroughly discussed, and I positively don’t know what to do.’

‘I am really very sorry to place you in such a dilemma sir; but I have not made up my mind either one way or the other; I left it until I had seen you, and if you say stop I will gladly do so; I have no wish to leave; I am only anxious to do what is right.’

‘There is no need to tell me that, Pawley,’ he replied after a short reflection, but it’s that confounded honesty of yours that gives me all the trouble just now. There’s no second thought about me wanting you to stop, but the way you have always treated me won’t allow my selfishness to stand in the way of your advantage. No, Pawley, in spite of myself I shall be forced to let you go, and there’s an end of it. Harleston stands at the very top of his profession; he has it in his power to make the fortune of any man he takes a liking for; that he has evidently done for you, and though I wish the devil had hold of him before he did it for my own sake, for yours I am heartily glad - you deserve all any man can do for you, and with all the heart I can find I bid you go and prosper.’

‘Thank you, sir; I shall not forget your kindness, and I can assure you it will not be

with an entirely light heart I shall leave you.'

'Neither will you readily be forgotten, my friend.' And then, as if a sudden thought had occurred to him,

But, Pawley, none of us know what may happen - even the best of us make mistakes occasionally - so I want you to give me one promise.'

'I will gladly do that, sir, if you will name it.'

'Should everything not turn out to be as bright as I hope it will, and you have to make another change at any time, promise me that you will come back to me at once.'

'You more than honour me, Mr. Severn, by such a request, and may rest assured that under such circumstances it shall be as you wish.'

'That's enough. Now don't make too much hurry to be off, but when you must go, consider yourself at liberty, and I wish you a hearty "Good-luck."'

When Ernest reached home and recounted all that had transpired his wife replied, - 'God certainly moves in a mysterious way; who but He could have done this. It would now be decidedly wrong to refuse the appointment, and yet, dear' - and she drew closer to him as if from a presentiment of danger - 'who can tell to what it leads us.'

'Do you fear it, darling?'

'No! I dare not fear to follow such a guidance. But at that moment I felt rather than saw a shadow rise before me. It has gone now.'

So Pawley accepted the offer, then balanced his accounts and left Cottominster with a modest fortune of less than three hundred pounds with which to begin his life in London.

Chapter VI - A Suicide

'I am half inclined - to think that I shall agree with you - for once - in your estimation of another person's character.'

Elinor was engaged in putting the finishing touches to her toilet as she spoke, and the pauses in her observations were due to trifling attentions to a refractory bow of ribbon, a few short hairs or the unsatisfactory sit of a lace frill. Ernest, thinking she had been sufficiently troubled with the children in their six hours' journey - the eldest of the three had been left for the present at Brassington - had undertaken to do all necessary unpacking and put the two mites to bed before she was ready for tea. He had frequently assisted in such an operation, but then the children had entered into the humour of the occasion, but he found it a very different matter to assume the sole responsibility when the little ones were tired and disposed to be

fretful. The elder of the two had just managed to thrust one arm into his nightdress before he fell on the edge of the bed fast asleep, two fingers in his mouth, and gradually slipping towards a promised fall; and the father was seriously - though without any thought of complaint or irritation - taxing his ingenuity to solve the vocal problem he had in hand.

It is in such moments as these when the woman has opportunity to balance accounts with the lords of creation and obtain a willing agreement to the proposition that though on some special occasions she is the inferior party there are others when the advantage is equally with herself. It is no use saying that domestic duties are not a fitting sphere in which to make the comparison; they are quite as much so as to thrust a woman on to 'Change or into the score of other truly masculine employment for the sake of proving her inferiority. Let us be honest, drop our cyclopean prejudices and rise to the justice of acknowledging that while there are legitimate spheres in which the man must reign, there are also others where the woman is queen by inalienable right and title.

Pawley had arrived at this conclusion and raised his head as his wife spoke in the hope of seeing her come to his relief. But the mischievous and apparently unconscious Elinor was in favour of all lessons being thoroughly well grounded; neither was she in undue haste to claim her victory. Ernest would willingly have retired, but she was generous and he dared not speak, knowing the badinage his application would evoke. He therefore contented himself with a half-suppressed sigh, which Elinor heard and good-naturedly appreciated, and answered her remark with, -

'Only for once, my queen; and who is it you refer to?'

'To Miss Prout, of course' - just another glance and a touch of the front hair - 'and you know what I mean about agreeing with you - you are such a soft-hearted goose, if anybody speaks a kind word to you, you are at once prepared to swear by them until they pick your pocket or knock you down.'

'And do you think I am getting better in that way?' he asked.

'I cannot commit myself to say so much for the present - you are asking far too much,' and she shook her head in playful indecision. 'One exception to an established rule may be due to an accident, but I shall be glad to make such an acknowledgment if the future warrants it. All I need is proof, and I must have that, for the world is very bad, and good as my lad is, even his flesh is very weak -'

'Go on, dear; don't stop yet; and -'

'And what? That is all I intended to say,' she added, curiously unconscious.

'It's a pity to spoil a complete adaptation. The world is very bad, the flesh is weak - why not continue with, and the devil is not a very hopeful pupil?'

'Hush, hush, dear!' she admonished as she crossed and took the baby: that would

cast a reflection on my foresight in choosing a husband, and surely you would not have me commit such an indiscretion.'

Just a few touches of the mother hand, and two little weary heads lay comfortably upon the pillows, two little mouths puckered themselves to answer the angels' kisses, and two little sleepers passed through the gates of Slumber Town. Then the travellers quietly withdrew and descended to Miss Prout's private room, where Gradeley and Tressey were waiting to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Pawley, greet the return of her husband, and join them at tea.

The sentimental clerk had donned his crimson Morocco slippers for the occasion, and on his way home had secured a small bunch of lilies of the valley which he ceremoniously presented on introduction.

'Permit me to have the pleasure.'

'Thank you; but how strange you should have chosen my favourite flower.'

'Is that really so? How very fortunate!' Just then his eyes caught sight of Gradeley, who was impatiently waiting to offer the lady a chair. This was not according to the clerk's intention, and though the place was not the most convenient or the one designed he seized the chair nearest and in an instant invited her: Now my dear madam, let me offer you a seat. You have had a long journey, and Miss Prout will do the honours.' Then quietly appropriating the chair Gradeley had so sedulously guarded, Tressey smiled complacently while the elder man glared almost ferociously at him over his *pince-nez*.

'Here, Pawley,' he expostulated, 'I must protest against this man's monopoly of your wife.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Gradeley, but I thought Miss Prout and yourself were most admirably adapted to each other, and I am sure Mr. Pawley is sufficiently generous to allow me this great pleasure at his expense.'

'All right, my friends, settle your own disputes and I won't grumble.' Then, with a cynical glance at Miss Prout, he added, 'Not unless there is a ladies' conference in the Hall.'

'Mr. Pawley, Mr. Pawley! I do hope you will be kept in order now your wife is here.'

'Not if you expect me to do it,' replied Elinor; 'he is far beyond my control, I can assure you.'

'Will you allow me, madam, to return you the sincere thanks of the family for the assurance your words afford us,' said Gradeley; 'there has been much dispute among us whether you would join Miss Prout's antiquated cause or our own. In the one case our burden would have been intolerable, but now we are relieved and our anxious minds will be set at rest. Miss Prout, you will please understand that Mrs. Pawley is with us, you will still remain alone.'

'If I am not mistaken it is I who stand alone,' cried Pawley, whose thoughts had been on another. 'I say, Miss Prout, this is scarcely the generosity I expected. I have been too long and well married to appreciate being the odd man, and I don't wish to repeat the mistake I made last time; can't we ask George to join us?'

He noticed a curiously inquiring look pass between the three as he spoke.

'Has not Mr. Gradeley told you?' she inquired.

'No! I have heard nothing! Why - what has happened?'

'Don't you know that we have lost him?' asked Tressey, in astonishment.

'No! How - when?'

Pawley pushed aside his plate and cup; neither muffins nor tea had any attraction for him in the doubts excited by the announcement. He looked eagerly, impatiently for more information. but the men were too much occupied with self-evident evasions to notice him, and so the duty was forced upon Miss Prout.

'I cannot tell you how, Mr. Pawley, but it is certainly the most painful occurrence I have ever been connected with. It will be three weeks tomorrow since an old friend and a neighbour of his sister's called to see him, bringing a letter and one or two trifles from home. He only intended to stop the day and suggested that George should spend it with him. The thought of it quite excited him, for I must tell you he was very much depressed after you went away, and never appeared to take an interest in anything except your letters. But he quite brightened up at the idea of a day with his friend and went away as happy as a schoolboy. It was nearly midnight when a policemen brought him home, and he was in the most pitiable condition you ever saw - drunk, dilapidated and speechless. Charles', pointing to Tressey, 'and another put him to bed, and in the morning he was so ill and ashamed he refused to come down until the house was empty. And oh what a miserable wreck he looked. I shall never forget it to my dying day. I brought him in here; gave him some coffee and toast, which I compelled him to eat, and then I gave him a most serious talking to, both of us weeping like children' - here her kindly feelings overcame her again - 'and he promised me that so long as he lived he would never touch the drink again. How he cried and wished that you were here! - it would not have happened then - or if he could only get through till you came back he would be all right. Well, Charles came home and promised if he would go to his room and keep quiet, they would have tea together then go for a long walk, and until you came back again he would do what he could to help him.'

'God bless you for that, Tressey. The Master will not be unmindful of such a service.' But Pawley could trust himself to say no more, and the lady continued.

'He appeared to be thankful for this offer, and though he was more broken up than I had ever seen him went back to his room, and we heard nothing more of him. When tea was ready Charles went up to his room, but he was gone - must have gone

out almost at once, for his bed was not in any way disturbed. Several of the gentlemen went after him in every direction, and for hours every likely and unlikely corner was searched again and again. The police were communicated with and his description circulated, but all without effect until after ten o'clock, when we heard that the river police had found the body of a man, left by the tide, in the mud at Three Cranes Wharf. Poor George had drowned himself.'

Pawley did not speak; his eyes were swimming with tears, and only by a desperate effort was he able to make even a show of self-control. At length he pushed his chair aside and retired to the window to hide his emotion. 'Yes, Pawley,' said Gradeley, presently, 'I cannot get it out of my mind that if you had been here this would not have happened. When I told him that you were coming he almost danced with joy and said, "Thank God! When he comes I shall be safe."

'It was not me, but Christ he wanted; but was there not here one man who could lay hold of him in his extremity and lead him to such a shelter? Oh, Master, Master! art Thou still so unable to save lost souls because of our unbelief? Forgive us, Lord! Oh, forgive us! But I thank Thee, George is safe! Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good unto Thee!'

After the first rebuke, which almost involuntarily escaped him under stress of his sorrow, he included himself in the wild cry of repentant remorse in which he recognised his Master's loneliness. He was no exception to other men; there was a tone of self-reproach in his plea for forgiveness as if the thought had struck him that he had been specially unfaithful in some sense, and the helplessness of Mason was due to his own wandering away from his Lord.

His prayer was brief, but the like of it in intensity and soul-disturbing fervour was unknown, save perhaps to one among the few who heard it, and with a common unspoken consent they left him alone while the storm of his feelings passed by.

Later in the evening Tressey found him reading, and ventured to refer to the subject again.

'Pardon my interrupting you, but what you said about poor George is troubling me; I wish I had your faith about him.'

'Sit down, Tressey, and explain yourself,' he answered with a quiet solicitude in which the sound of his sorrow could still be heard.

'I wish I could believe that he is really better where he is.'

Pawley closed his book and put it from him while his eyes were fixed upon his friend, full of a yearning sympathy to help him to reach the comfort he stood in need of.

'Let me try if I can in any way help you,' he responded, 'and to begin with let me recall to your mind one of the later cautions Christ bade us keep in remembrance. "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and

wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before.” Now we are neither told when nor how these fraudulent imitations shall appear. The responsibility of discovering them is thrown upon our shoulders, but we are very considerably assisted in our endeavours to discover them by knowing that they will in most ways be so like the Lord’s Christ as to be able even to deceive the elect unless great care is used. But the Master has left us His standard by which to judge and arrive at a certain knowledge – “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Having brought this warning to your mind, I now want you to forget it for the moment while we try the case of poor Mason, by Christ himself, without troubling the Church in the matter. The dying thief was not rejected but comforted by a promise when he turned and asked for remembrance; the woman taken in adultery was worthy of death according to the definite laws of the Jews, for she was taken in the very act; but Christ saw another and better way of dealing with the case, so He did not condemn her. It is evident He saw something men did not discern, understood a method of judgment the scribes did not use in their decisions. This Christ – “the same yesterday, to-day and forever” - has adjudicated for Mason, and as the thief and adulteress fared more mercifully at His hands than they did at the hands of men, I am forced to believe that he is better there than here. You doubt and fear because you accept the decrees of the Church, because you allow it to pronounce judgment, and accept its dictates as the voice of God. But is its assumption just, and upon what warranty do its officials base it? Christ never allowed them such authority in His day, and surely they had equal if not superior claims to their pretension than the teachers to-day, unless these men by their fruits and works manifest their unity with the one true Christ. In what I am saying I want you very distinctly to understand that I refer to systems, not individuals, and to Roman, English and Free Churches equally, for if a man “(or a church)” have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.” Now what is the Christ to which these organisations direct our attention, and whom they ask us to worship? It is not the Man of Galilee, but a marble Christ! A plaster Christ! A painted Christ! A printed Christ! A creed-bound Christ! A man-made Christ - blind, speechless, emotionless, pitiless - a lay figure! Dumb! For whom men in search of a profession become the self-authorised spokesmen and deliver its judgments according to their own necessities and the exigencies of the moment. What has God to do with it - what does He know about all this, save the blasphemy? The multitudes of men through the centuries of suffering and injustice have thrown themselves in broken-hearted imprecations before these denominational creations, but the Church-Christ moves not; hears not; answers not; Baal was not more deaf to the cries of his priests on Carmel, and as evidence of it we may look around, not only at the sin which abounds without, but at the “envy, malice, and all uncharitableness” that is tearing the Churches with internecine strife. Do they afford us an ideal vision of the peace of Christ which passeth all understanding? If not - why not? Again, leaving the internal bribes, look at the attitude the Churches have assumed and still assume towards

questions of common humanity! Half of our pulpits in the name of Christ blessed the Northern States in their war for the freedom of the slave, but the other half in the name of the same Christ prayed for Southern success; a weak pulpit protest satisfies the case of a cold-blooded butchery of fellow Christians because we know so much of our gold is invested in Turkish bonds; and at home a similar half-hearted regret is spoken against the drink traffic lest the brewers and distillers who are pillars in or contributors to the Churches should be offended. I know you will tell me that thunders of denunciation have been hurled at these abuses, but words are cheap and hurt no one however strong may be their utterance. Where is the unity of action He who came to save would insist upon? The Church has power to crush every abuse and oppression if she has the will to do so; why is it not done and righteousness established? "By their fruits ye shall know them." No wonder the multitudes turn from our Churches in disgust! No wonder poor George flung himself into the open arms of the river! But I thank my God these are but the false Christs: there still remains the Christ of God for those who seek Him with all their hearts as being the only Mediator between God and man. He is not the property of any Church, but, whether in the Church or not, all who diligently seek Him shall find Him. He neither requires nor allows any councils or self-authorised teachers to interpret or accommodate His word to any occasion or necessity. "Whatsoever ye would that a man should do to you do ye even so to him" requires no doctor of divinity to expound, and will stand for all time without revision or adaptation; and every law of God necessary to our salvation is equally explicit and self-evident. The disciples of the true Christ are those who learn to know and follow Him in practice and in life, in their self-abnegation laying aside that natural arrogance by which we strive to rule, and accept the Divine law that "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." This stone of self-surrender and sacrifice to the true disciple becomes the stone of offence where the hireling is turned aside and the separation is henceforth complete. The follower of the Christ dies with Him to Self, but lives again in the resurrected Saviour, or, as Paul exclaims, "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This life is the true life sent down from heaven in which the servant becomes the Master and the works that He did the servant also rises into the power to do. Here we have the evidence of His fruits by which we are to know Him also. "Is not this the Christ" for whose second coming "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together"? Is not this the true bread of which if any man eat he need never hunger again? Yes, Tressey, this is the Christ - the God we need - and this is the Christ poor George would meet when the veil was rent and earth had fallen away.'

'It is always a pleasure to hear you talk, but you are a most outrageous heretic after all.'

'That opinion will not disturb me, my friend, for I shall still be in the company of the Master, who, knowing the Churches would enthrone the false Christs, also assured his disciples that they would be thrust out of the synagogues. If I am permitted to be with Him I shall have no need to fear.'

'But what about reputation and bread-and-cheese considerations?'

'God knows what I have need of in these and other ways, and Christ has promised that to those who "seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness all these things shall be added." That is sufficient for me.'

'You are a strange man, Pawley; I should never understand you. But what has all this to do with George?'

'Much, when you grasp the difference between the true and the false Christ. If Mrs. Pawley and I went out tomorrow and one of our children fell sick or met with an accident, you would be anxious, but when we came you would say, "It will be all right now." Just so it is with our Father - God. Under any circumstances it is better to be with Him.'

'Under any circumstances!'

'Yes, my friend, given such a Father, and the circumstance is not possible where it would be to a child's advantage to be away from Him.'

'But what about his sin?'

'What sin?'

'His suicide! Surely you are forgetting that "the wages of sin is death."'

'I am forgetting nothing, and I also wish to ask you again to remember that I am speaking of George as he is now - in the presence of God and His Christ, not arraigned at the bar of any theology. He has passed beyond the reach and jurisdiction of councils and dogmas now, and will receive a righteous judgment from One who "knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." In the decision of that court every contributing force, each predisposing event - heredity, environment, and the probable multitude of influences and causes of which we are ignorant - will be considered, weighed and balanced - not against the perfect standard to which we are called to aspire, but against the power of resistance and the strength of endurance which were honestly available for him in the conflict. Christ distinctly taught us in the incident of the woman with the box of spikenard that the judgments of God are not necessarily based upon an arbitrary demand for perfection, but have a just regard to all the circumstances of the person, and then the question is: has he done what he could? This is equity. In any other walk of life save the Church, England - humanity would rise in rebellion against the injustice of any other decision. Do we hold a lunatic responsible for assaults? Is the kleptomaniac punishable for larceny? Is an idiot bound by the laws of logic, or a blind man guilty of falling into an unprotected excavation? Most certainly not, but society recognises and accepts its own responsibility towards these afflicted ones that they shall be afforded such protection as their cases require. But while we acknowledge and accept this claim in its physical aspects, is there no corresponding demand upon us in the moral plane? If the kleptomaniac needs to be cared for and protected lest he

purloin the goods of another, why not the dipsomaniac from destroying himself? Is it not because the Church has allowed - I do not say taught or set forth, but allowed - such a system of false estimates to be introduced and encouraged, even within her own fold, as to completely reverse the teachings of the Christ, and personal property has become of more intrinsic value than the souls of men? In this permitted fallacy lies all the *raison d'être* of the drink traffic, of which poor Mason is another victim slaughtered and thrust into the presence of God. Who is responsible for the continual and horrible massacre of men, women and children - for all the suffering and misery which follows in its train? Would Christ have dallied with such an infamous system for what He could make out of it, or out of consideration for those who are making vast fortunes from the blood money of the slain? Can you associate Him "who was rich yet for our sakes became poor," who came "to seek and to save the lost," the Man who withstood the formalists and Pharisees until they hounded Him to death - can you in any way imagine Him to tolerate such a soul-destroying system? The Church winks at it while it damns children by a pre-natal disposition and appetite; she sends it to the diggings and colonies sandwiched between the cases packed with Bibles and away from friends and restraining influences such men as Mason fall victims to its temptation, contract its disease and rush to its death. Is he responsible? God must answer that; but the sin remains, and some persons will have to shoulder the responsibility of it. Who will these persons be? I tell you, my friend, my soul trembles for the men and women of the Churches when I read Ezekiel's terrible warning to the watchmen upon the walls of Zion - "If the watchmen see the sword come and blow not the trumpet and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take away any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." The Church is that watchman to-day, and as such the responsibility lies at her door.'

'But surely Mason and such as he are not without some responsibility.'

'The extent of that God will righteously determine - I cannot. This one thing I do know - and you will also bear me witness - he hated the drink and fought manfully to conquer his weakness. I had sufficient evidence of this the night before we parted. What do we know of the temptation under which he finally fell? Who knows his struggle and heroism in that fatal hour? What was his desire and cry for myself? Who can tell under what influence or from what motive he sought the river that night? He needed help - assistance; where could he find it? To whom could he go? You may condemn him if you are able to do so; the Church may hold him up as another instance of man's awful depravity, but I have faith to believe in a voice of a pitying Christ calling to him in sorrow his, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," and in that desperate plunge I can almost hear the prayer -

"Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind,

Sight, riches, healing, of the mind,

Yea, all I need in Thee to find,

O Lamb of God, I come.”

‘Under the waters of the Thames I believe the poor fellow found the everlasting arms of Him “who is able to save to the uttermost,” and I have no use or wish for any religion which has a narrower outlook.’

‘Oh, Pawley, again I wish I had your faith.’

‘You may have it, my brother, if you will accept an unchangeable - the Lord’s Christ in the place of a marble, speechless, emotionless, pitiless figment, manufactured by a blinded Church.’

Chapter VII – Harleston’s Programme

Michael Harleston, editor of the Fine Arts’ Mirror, author of Character Sketches drawn in Queer Corners, social reformer, and prospective editor of the Workman’s Register, was a great man; this much was popularly conceded upon such partial information and knowledge as was available for the public; but had the world been able to know, appreciate and value his unique excellences as he knew and valued himself, how much greater would he have been. This unfortunate act of injustice was very deplorable to himself, but he magnanimously bowed to the inevitable, and philosophically determined to await the full recognition and award of time. History, in the mechanical process of repeating itself, would undoubtedly rectify the short-sighted and inadequate appreciation of the present - the clear and unprejudiced noon of his just recognition would arrive, and over his honoured tomb the future would erect a trophy of worthy, if tardy, reward.

Of course he would hesitate to assert that - as a mortal - he was free from spot or blemish, though at the same time, without making any admissions, he would boldly challenge production of proofs of any moral defects and pleasantly accept the inability to do so as full discharge against any aspersions. The tongue of calumny was well-nigh silenced when the only suggestion it could level at him as to his past was a doubt as to where he came from and who he was, and such a slender thread was for years the whole stock-in-trade of his traducers; but they made all available capital out of it, until they felt competent to add the innuendo that the strength of his genius lay in using the brains of others for his own aggrandisement. But all prominent men must needs have their detractors, as well as foibles; they are the shadows of all great personalities, and Michael Harleston was no exception to the rule.

One of the chief studies of his life had been to take a moderate care of himself in every respect, with a result that when standing upon the verge of seventy, in spite of his profuse crown of long white hair, he had the strength and appearance of a man

fully ten years younger. Moderately rounded in form, healthy, alert, full of life, with a clear, peach-like complexion rippling with smiling good humour (unless someone should chance to controvert his opinion) and a voice rich, full and resonant, he was at sight an attractive man. Nature had richly endowed him with the power of speech, tinged with native humour but carefully eliminated the brogue. His sentences rolled from him with the easy grace and music of a waterfall, and his treasury of reminiscences and imagination made him a most valuable acquisition in society or wherever a speech was in order. The secret of his popularity had not to be sought by those who knew him, and with a pen almost as facile as his tongue he captured and held the multitude.

It was scarcely ten o'clock, but the chief had already been at his desk an hour when Gradeley asked permission to introduce Mr. Pawley.

In the brief interval during which he was left alone Ernest paced the floor of the waiting-room in a state of nervous anticipation. One of the great ambitions of his life was about to be gratified; and any moment he might be summoned into the presence of one of the foremost men associated with the English press. Only they who possess his unquenchable thirst and almost superstitious reverence for learning and culture can understand his condition. He was passing into one of those experiences of life which could never be recalled or repeated. He had no knowledge, could formulate no idea, could arrange no plan how best to preserve the impressions made upon him. That they would come crowding in whole battalions treading upon each other, strike him, and then pass away, and only leave the shadow of a memory which in many instances would also fade beyond recovery, he was prepared to admit, and yet he would be ignorant which to seize upon, his mind would be a whirl of amazement, and afterwards he would only retain the consciousness that in his admiration he had lost the treasures of the moment and only secured the driftage that had come to his feet in the slack water of the stream.

His waiting was one of those peculiar periods of life we wish were over, and yet still hold them with a strange reluctance to let them go. But the door opened; the interval was past, and the next moment he stood in the presence of the man whose name had been for years a veneration and an ideal for him.

'My dear Mr. Pawley!' exclaimed Harleston in all his pompous impetuosity as he hurried round the table, 'allow me to congratulate myself and shake you by the hand. Let me bid you welcome and assure you that this is the proudest moment of my life - my long and eventful life.'

The concluding assurance was one of his favourite stock flourishes, which we shall no doubt meet with again - little stage effects he employed to round off his grandiloquence.

'You flatter me, sir; for surely all the honour of this occasion is mine.'

'Not at all, my dear friend - pardon the liberty - not in the least, I assure you, and

I trust I shall hear no more of such a baseless suggestion - utterly baseless suggestion. You have done me an honour past all expression in stooping to accept my trivial proposal; and our mutual friend, Gradeley, has laid me under lasting obligation to him in bringing your good name and excellent qualities to my notice. This great nation, of which I form such an unworthy part, has throughout her history been conscious, appreciatively conscious, of services rendered to her cause, and I am persuaded the day will come when it will be recalled with pride that Frederic Reynolds Gradeley was instrumental in bringing you into association with your humble servant - your most profoundly humble servant. But be seated, my dear sir; pray be seated, and allow me the pleasure of making your acquaintance. You are almost a stranger to our great and excellent city?’

The advent of Pawley had surmounted the final difficulty in the publication of the proposed Workman’s Register, and brought the noble lord’s cash almost within reach. Harleston was gratified, and being always anxious to create a favourable first expression on making any new acquaintance, under the inspiration of the extreme gratification of the moment he outvied himself.

‘Yes; my acquaintance with London is very limited at present, so much so as to make me doubt my competence to discharge the duties the acceptance of your offer imposes upon me.’

‘But I have never doubted it since first I heard your name, and now that we know each other I am more assured than ever. London is a great city, a bewilderingly great city, full of great possibilities, advantages, responsibilities and rewards; still at the same time full of sympathy for young men of courage, ability and ambition. I came to it like its typical hero - Whittington, a penniless boy, without a friend, companion or prospect save a determination to succeed. Now look at me - see what I am to-day. And that which I am is only a poor foreshadowing of what you may be when I shall be gathered to my rest - my well-earned rest. But mark me sir, - and I am speaking with all the sober deliberation of long experience - the young men of to-day are a degenerate race compared with their predecessors; they are void of the moral backbone, the stamina and dogged perseverance of their fathers. They seek the rabble rather than the study; the chorus in preference to the solo; gratification before distinction. The crowds of our common humanity are trampling each other to death in the valleys of unambitious lives, and needlessly so, because to the right and left of them rise the mountainous heights of more glorious achievements than their fathers ever dreamed of. Pinnacles of discovery beckon them to advance; heights of revelation are appealing to intrepid souls; positions of boundless distinctions are waiting to be occupied; treasuries of reward ready for appropriation. The herd, the crush, the competition, the opposition, the sweating and starvation are all conditions of the common level, but higher up there is freedom, liberty, fraternity, comfort, affluence. The men of mind and genius who constitute the force and power of this great nation have no desire to live alone in those sparsely-peopled heights; we seek

for and court communion with kindred souls. Thought inspires thought, speculation probes investigation, achievement creates ambition, success enforces emulation. When the fires of intellect are once burning, association ensures advance, and the fraternity of thought assembles in the audience-chamber of Truth's divinity. I hope, sir, that we shall have the pleasure of your acquaintance therein, and I am glad to find you are in possession of a soul so sympathetic with my own. Through the door the Workman's Register flings open for our advance we will pass hand in hand to the fair future stretching out before us.'

'I sincerely hope that we shall find it so.'

This was not exactly what Pawley intended or wished to say, but the affable verbosity of Harleston bewildered him, and so emphasised the natural nervous diffidence which affected him in his first meeting with this man of superior condition as to place him at a serious disadvantage. He was unaccustomed to such flowers of rhetoric in connection with ordinary matters of business, and therefore considered it best to content himself with a non-committal reply. He saw his mistake in a moment.

'Hope, sir!' and Pawley was startled by the angry, almost vicious, manner he assumed. I do not hope - I know! Know most assuredly that it will be so! Without any other consideration or inducement, my name alone is enough to secure this. You have not hitherto been associated in business with such a name as I possess, therefore I must excuse you - most charitably excuse you, and make it my pleasure - my supreme pleasure to watch the surprise with which you will behold one of the greatest triumphs the press has ever secured.'

Pawley had profited by the one lesson and was too shrewd to express another wish just then. He had also come to the opinion that great men evidently had strange peculiarities, and he would find that Harleston would be more difficult to deal with, for a time at least, than Severn. He therefore concluded that it would be better to get to the business part of the interview at once and let the peculiarities of intellectual latitudes alone.

'Have you fixed any date for the publication?' he inquired.

'That will lie entirely with yourself. When you are ready with the business part, you will find the editorial chair entirely at your service.'

'Has anything yet been done in the way of announcement or advertising?'

'No, sir! and nothing will be done in that way. To advertise a work of which I am the editor would be throwing money into the street - wastefully throwing it into the street. When we have decided on the date of publication I shall have the fact announced in every paper in the country with my name as editor-in-chief, and everything necessary to success will then be done - most effectively done.'

Pawley could scarcely believe his own ears when he heard this determination, and

forthwith came to the conclusion that if Harleston was to be accepted as an average, great men were not necessarily business men.

‘I have no wish to discuss the details of the matter with you now,’ replied Pawley, who wanted to avoid another difference of opinion for the presence; of course those will naturally fall in my own department, and I will submit my plans and propositions to you for approval.’

‘Do you imagine, sir’ - and he fairly stormed with indignation - ‘that you come into this office in the character of a highwayman and command me to stand and deliver all authority into your hands - your inexperienced and incapable hands! If so, sir, let me tell you that you have made a mistake - a most damnable mistake. The key of all success in literary enterprise lies not in its business department, nor in reckless advertising, but in the editorial chair, without which you can do nothing - absolutely nothing. In that chair, in this instance, I shall sit; from it I shall sway the sceptre of our success, and none will rule beside me - I ask and require no consort. Throughout my long career, my long and most distinguished career, I have waited for this occasion, to prove to the world the weight and value of a truly great name, and now, now that it has arrived, do you imagine that I shall consent to share my laurels with common business or dirty advertising? No, sir - once and for all, it will not be done. I have my own plans, settled, fixed, and carefully perfected through years of waiting, and your duty will be to see them carried out - faithfully and completely carried out. Of the four first numbers we issue I propose to post twenty thousand copies each week to eighty thousand individuals in all parts of the country; this will secure us so many subscribers, and no other advertisement will be needed.’

‘That will prove to be but an expensive failure,’ Ernest ventured, gravely shaking his head. He was too honest whatever might be the result to allow such a suicidal proposition to pass without a protest.

‘Are you the editor or I, sir?’ stormed Harleston.

He made no further attempt to argue the point; perhaps when he knew his chief better he would be able to bring more influence to bear upon him, but so far he had sincerely regretted he had not had this interview before he left London a month ago. Then the thought occurred to him that God knew all about it and only under signal Divine guidance had he taken the step, therefore he dare not doubt but that all would be well.

For the rest he very carefully confined himself to gathering the editor’s ideas in general without venturing any suggestions, and as he did so Harleston at once became affable and effusive as ever, opening up a dozen golden phantasies and impossible vagaries to which Pawley listened in order that he might thoroughly understand the position in which he was placed. Then he retired with a determination to pursue the preliminaries as far as possible upon his own lines and trust to his practical success to influence the unpractical whams of Harleston.

‘Well, what do you think of him?’ asked Gradeley as they reached the street.

‘He may be a good editor, but he is no man of business. I am afraid I shall not be so comfortable with him as I could wish.’

‘Oh, he’s a crank; you must humour him, then he is all right.’

‘That is all very well so far, but I shall be held responsible for the way the business part of the concern is managed.’

‘Nonsense, man! You take things too seriously. If he has his way he will only have himself to blame, and Shenstone holds him alone responsible.’

‘But suppose for an instant the *Register* should prove-to be a failure.’

‘Nonsense, man! You might with just as much reason suppose St. Paul’s to be carted into the middle of Hyde Park.’

‘I am not so sure of that. A name like Harleston’s is certainly a tremendous force to have behind a periodical, but to assume it is a warranty for throwing every other necessity for success to the four winds of heaven is suicidal in the last degree, and I tell you if his quixotic ideas are persisted in the *Register* will be a total failure from the beginning.’

‘Well, if it is so,’ and Gradeley shrugged his shoulders in careless indifference, he and his lordship will have called for their tune and will have to pay the piper.’

‘That may do for them; but where shall I be, having to seek for a new situation with a record of ruining the *Register* by my bad management?’

‘But how can you ruin it if he won’t allow you to manage it?’

‘The world will not know that, and do you think business men would believe me if I made such a statement against such a man as Harleston? If so, your opinion of business men is very different to mine.’

‘That’s a horse of a different colour, my friend; I didn’t look at it like that. Well, I’ll watch my opportunity; he is sure to speak to me about it, and I’ll see what I can do. Still I can’t help thinking you are in a pessimistic mood to-day, because I believe the mention of his name will create a roaring success from the first.’

‘Not if every business precaution is ignored on account of it. But we shall see.’

Elinor’s quick eye divined her husband’s disappointment before her tongue was able to make its anxious inquiry, but still she cheerily asked, -

‘How did you get on?’

‘Only so-so,’ he replied, then, taking the proffered kiss, turned to lay his hat and coat aside without another word.

He was in no mood for talking just then, but as luncheon was ready there was fortunately no time for business, and Elinor knew well what a different aspect life assumes to a man after a good meal, so she waited, and during the repast, which was

taken *en famille*, unobtrusively did her best to keep the conversation from the one tender subject, certain that her husband would unbosom himself as soon as he was ready to do so.

She was not mistaken. As soon as they left the table he insinuated his arm around her waist, led her into one of the smaller rooms and told her everything.

She was surprised, astonished, that one in Harleston's position should act so unreasonably - so strangely reckless, though she did not say so. Her first thought was to cheer her husband, for, like all impetuous natures, when he went down it was always to the bottom, and she doubted whether she had ever seen him quite so low before.

'I am just wondering,' she began with a tender corrective smile as he finished his story, and simultaneously she threw her arms round his neck as if to hang thereon, I am just wondering when my lad will be content to walk along the ordinary matter-of-fact roads of life, because then you will get rid of the greater part of your disappointment. Why will you, in your impetuosity, always strike off across country, over hedge and ditch, bog and pitfall, in your desire to throw yourself at the feet of each new hero you discover? If I were to see Mr. Harleston, I will undertake to say, if I did not like him, I should at least enjoy his company, and come away without all the dark forebodings in which you have wrapped yourself. And why? Just because I should go about my work in a common-sense and practical manner. Do you hear what I say?' At this she first shook him and then consoled him with a kiss. I know how it all came about, a great deal better than you can tell me, because I know you better than you know yourself. Ever since you knew you were coming to London you have been busy day and night building a whole city of castles in the air, all of which have been fairy palaces for Michael Harleston, who was a greater man than all the myths and legends knew, greater than all the hero-gods of Greece and Rome - the only man who, of all time, had found the philosopher's stone, and could transmute everything he touched into gold. You see I know all about it, because I was once foolish enough to do the same thing. Well, now you have been to see your aerial demi-god, and lo he is neither a king nor a hero; nor is he plastic as clay to be moulded just as you had determined; he is simply a man of flesh and blood, with a big reputation, a bit of temper and a will of his own. My poor lad! How disappointed you must be, after all your architectural labours! And to see all your magnificent castles fall in ruins at your feet! It's too bad, and I'm very sorry,' Again she drew his head down and kissed him. 'But that is your side of the picture. Now sit down and I will give you mine. And first, not being a descendant of Don Quixote, I am not in the habit of chasing wild geese; again, not being related to heroes of Bean-stalk fame, I like to keep my habitations on terra firma. I think it best to watch the birth and growth of my heroes, so as to make sure whether they are worthy of my homage, before I prostrate myself at their shrines; and as for modelling in clay, darling, there is a much better Potter than myself to whom I am quite content to leave what He so

much better understands. When I see Mr. Harleston I expect to see a gentleman with a bright intellect, diversified, it may be, by moods, opinions and even eccentricities such as are to be found in more or less striking prominence in all men. But perhaps from his position I may find even remarkable peculiarities I have not met with before, and I have no doubt in the first interview I might appear to him in some ways as strange as he would seem to me. It is impossible for a great man to be shallow, my lad, and they need to be known before they can be understood. This is your first experience with a man of such eminence, and you are somewhat like a child who sees the sea for the first time - very dissatisfied because you are not able to see all round it.'

'But his ideas are so unpractical - so thoroughly unbusinesslike.'

'I am not one bit surprised at that. He is not an ordinary man, and you may be sure his mistakes will be extraordinary. But may you not also have made a mistake in him when you thought he would at once hand all business and authority to you without satisfying himself of your capacity to undertake it? For in spite of your references it is only likely he would wish to know you for himself. You would have done so - why do you object to him? How do you know but that his whole attitude and manner towards you was assumed for the purpose of testing your qualities and tact for business? I should quite expect it to be so, and when you next see him you will find him altogether a different man. But whether this proves to be so or not, you need not fear, my lad; so long as God leads us forward all must be well.'

So she cleared the cloud away, and Pawley took up his work with the determination that so far as he could secure it the Register should be an unqualified success.

Chapter VIII - At Work

The interview with Harleston inducted Pawley into his new life, and understanding the duties as well as the responsibilities of his position he dismissed the vagaries and peculiar ideas of his chief as far as possible from his mind, and set about his work with the business promptitude and whole-hearted, unselfish fidelity that had won the warm commendation and appreciation of Mr. Severn.

The days were full of demands which were met with loyal and willing responses. Elinor's first anxiety was to find a house, and Ernest remembering how a commercial friend had previously extolled the neighbourhood of Dulwich as being pleasant, convenient, and in every way adapted to men of moderate means, a trip was at once made to the south-eastern suburb, where a pretty bijou residence was secured, and Elinor at once began to set her house in order. In this of course Ernest had to be frequently consulted in the choice of carpets, curtains, and a hundred other things in which his wife delighted to please him; but the inroads such matters made upon his time had frequently to be atoned for by business incursions into the

hours of sleep.

Harleston had his private reasons, to be presently discovered, for arranging that the new periodical should be produced by Messrs. Levison, the proprietors and printers of his more pretentious journal; but hitherto only the barest preliminaries had been decided, and the mass of technicalities were left to Pawley, including the final arrangement of form and size, with the production of 'dummy' copies for the purpose of his advertisement canvass.

Next he had to decide what advertisements should be solicited and accepted for its pages. This was a work involving far more personal responsibility, tact and judgment in those days than at present. The present economic system by which advertising had been reduced to something like a science through the excellent arrangement of agencies, was in those days in its infancy, and the manager of a periodical had to come into personal contact with his client, fighting his own battle and winning or losing not so much by the merits of his journal as by his tact and acquaintance with the secret technicalities of his business. He must understand which advertisements were looked for and regarded as certificates of value, and the groups of advertisers among whom they were each accepted; the preferences of others as to positions, and the rivalries and jealousies as to precedence in solicitation; undesirable announcements from association with which others would stand aloof, and a host of details necessary to the successful management of this department such as are not necessary for us to enter into here. Still Pawley had to ascertain and bear these things in mind, and the fact that he was new to London, and the Register occupied a field to which he was equally strange, considerably increased his labours. Certainly the programme of his paper was a wide one, the name of Harleston would be a tower of strength, the contract had been signed for an edition of one hundred thousand copies to commence with - which Harleston was assured would have to be supplemented on the second number, but Ernest wisely determined to guarantee - if any time he was pressed to give one - not more than half the number, upon which he judiciously based his tariff. Then securing a few useful hints from men learned in such matters, he threw aside a certain class of announcements as not acceptable under any circumstances, and was ready to commence active operations.

The week had been an arduous one for both husband and wife, and when Saturday evening arrived, with its cessation of worry about workmen, furniture, advertisements and printers, they breathed a sigh of profound relief and looked longingly towards the rest of tomorrow.

Monday came all too soon, and Pawley was early at the office to submit his dummy copy to Harleston and lay before him such brief outlines of his proposals as he deemed necessary for approval.

'My dear Pawley, pray do not trouble yourself to enter into any elaborate system of explanation,' cried the garrulous editor. 'Your genius, foresight and marvellous

grasp of detail, together with the extraordinary facility with which you have made your preparations, astounds me - most completely astounds me. You are a worthy coadjutor to myself, and I have full confidence in leaving in your competent hands the business of the *Register*. Go, sir, and I wish you all prosperity.'

Such an unqualified commendation was far more than Pawley had hoped to receive, and, like a wise man acting upon the idea that delays might prove to be dangerous, he retired before half his intentions had been accomplished. He had certainly made progress with his chief and was content.

In the Strand he sprang upon a 'bus going towards the city.

'Full outside - room for one in,' cried the conductor.

'That will do,' and he dropped into a seat second from the door.

It was still early and the later business and professional men were anxious to reach their offices and chambers. Every instant someone was getting out or others coming in, until having passed Chancery Lane the 'bus began to discharge with freedom. At Ludgate Circus it filled again, a stout man with a large flat parcel making a rude dash and securing the last seat opposite Pawley.

'You go to the Bank, don't you?' he inquired of the conductor.

'Yes - penny.'

'Put me down at Queen Street.'

'Right,' and the 'bus rolled slowly up the hill.

'I hope my parcel isn't in your way,' said the man, apologetically, to the gentleman next the door.

'Don't name it,' he answered pleasantly. 'We are all in a hurry and you are not going far.'

Cannon Street caused some little delay owing to the usual heavy traffic of the morning, but presently the conductor cried impatiently, -

'Now then, 'ere you are - Queen Street.'

The man with the parcel started, and at a bound was clear of the vehicle and ran up the street. As he moved, Pawley saw the watch chain of the gentleman hanging loose, and shouting, 'Your watch, sir!' was immediately on the heels of the thief. The conductor failed to grasp the situation, but knowing Pawley had not paid his fare, followed him with the owner of the watch bringing up the rear.

The chase was a short one before Pawley laid his hand upon the collar of the thief, and with a smart tug brought him up almost in touch with a policeman.

'Hello! What's up?' inquired the officer.

'He has - ' but the owner of the watch was at hand..

'He has picked my pocket of a watch.'

'Oh, what a wicked lie!' exclaimed the astonished fellow. I have but just come out of Watling Street and was running to catch the Hammersmith 'bus.'

'All right, old chappie,' returned the officer. 'I know yer didn't come out o' Watling Street. Hammersmith ain't any too healthy for delicate people so early in the day. You'd better come into King Street and sit down while they air it a bit out west.'

The fellow had no opportunity to refuse the invitation, and a few moments later the charge was entered against him. The gentleman was asked for a description of his watch, which, with several other stolen articles, was found upon searching the man.

'I scarcely know now to thank you for what you have done,' said the owner to Pawley. 'I prize that watch above all my possessions. It is a testimonial from a Sunday School over which I presided for twenty years.'

'I am equally glad to have had the opportunity of rendering you such a service under the circumstances.'

'I hope I may be in a position to return it some day. Good morning.'

'Good morning.'

They shook hands and parted.

A few minutes later, when Pawley was cool and quiet after his run, he entered the establishment where he had determined to offer the first space on his front cover, and inquired for Mr. Rose.

'Will you walk this way, sir?'

The next instant he was face to face with the owner of the watch again.

Pawley was the more visibly surprised of the two. Mr. Rose merely opened his eyes a trifle wider and smilingly inquired, -

'Is our meeting again so soon a coincidence or design?'

'Coincidence so far as I am concerned,' he replied, and yet I cannot but think there is also design behind it.'

'Sit down. Were you coming here when you were in the 'bus?'

'Yes, and here only. My next call is in the West End.'

'Well, do you know I think it is the most remarkable experience I ever met with.'

'It astonished me for the instant, but I begin to understand it better now.'

'I don't.'

'I thought you had been the superintendent of a Sunday school?' answered Pawley, with doubtful surprise.

‘But what has that to do with such an occurrence?’ Nothing, except to make me surprised at your astonishment.’

‘Astonishment What else would you expect? The equal wonder of it will not take place in London for a month.’

‘Perhaps not. But should not the rarity of the occurrence really be the subject of our surprise?’

‘I scarcely understand you.’

‘You and I both profess to be followers of the Master by whose name this country presumes to call itself – Christ! One of His names is Wonderful. Why should we be astonished when we receive an actual token of His presence?’

The quiet and unaffected manner in which the inquiry was put forward, void alike of anything approaching cant or apology, struck Mr. Rose very forcibly, and he looked at the speaker across his desk with keen and critical interest. Pawley’s eye met his with a calm and patient confidence. The subject was a most unusual one to come up at such an hour, especially in a city office. Still it had not been pushed forward or strained into prominence; in that one fact lay its singular peculiarity; it had dropped accidentally and unintentionally out of the incident of the morning, and was there to be dealt with equally or taking precedence over his correspondence and usual business routine. This stranger had just touched a most ordinary event in city experience, and it was made to disclose the very focal point of spiritual life. It revealed an achievement in the blending of religion and business - introducing the one as an absolutely unobjectionable factor into the other - which had long been desired and hitherto unattained. In some way this stranger had evidently solved the complex problem how life in all its manifold phases could be enshrined within and be consistently controlled by his religion. All this he deduced from the manner more than the speech of his visitor, and pushed his correspondence further aside in his desire to know more. How should he proceed?

‘But I think you were perhaps the more surprised of the two when you came in,’ he ventured.

‘Perhaps so; and yet it was not at the occurrence so much as at the assurance it was made to afford to me. ‘Indeed! May I know the rest?’

‘Yes, I will briefly explain the circumstances, but neither you nor I have the time just now to go into the matter fully. I am a stranger in London; this morning I am commencing work in connection with an entirely new departure, and seeking to be led by an unerring hand I am watching for some indication of it. As I tell you, I was on my way here when you lost your watch. I had no idea who you were when I left you at King Street, but when we met again, I saw the sign I waited for - behind what you may call coincidence, I saw a design.’

‘This is yet more wonderful. Tell me more.’

‘That would be an unspeakable pleasure, sir, but my further duties forbid it at present. But let me just say this, I believe such experiences should and might be much more frequent than they are in our lives; their rarity only reminds us there are higher degrees of discipleship for us to attain to where these privileges become a natural heritage. We simply have not, because we aspire not.’

‘Go on, my friend.’

‘Not now; neither you nor I can afford the time, but try and work out my meaning for yourself. We shall meet again sometime.’

It is needless to say that with such an introduction Pawley carried his business point, and during the day he received many assurances that the name of Harleston was even a more potent influence than he had anticipated. Surprise was expressed on every hand that no announcement of such an intention had been made, but the editor was known to be ‘a man of ideas’ and whatever his reason for secrecy it would prove to be well founded, and the appearance of the journal would no doubt prove to be a greater boom because it would follow so quickly on the heels of its own advertisement. Of course Harleston’s name could not be associated with failure, and with such a consensus of opinion Pawley’s work was comparatively easy in the advertising department, and, in spite of his experience, he frequently found himself wondering whether peculiar genius might not be able to succeed even though it did throw business considerations to the winds.

There was, however, another branch to his work to which Pawley had as yet given little or no attention, even though in point of importance it took precedence over the advertisements - in fact the latter were contracted for under the recognised condition that due care would be exercised in circulating the periodical when published. This raised the whole question of Harleston’s unpractical vagary, and when Pawley had proceeded so far with his arrangements as to render an interview with the managers of the great circulating agencies an absolute necessity, all the dreams his previous successes had encouraged vanished like a morning mist, and he was driven back to his original opinions that the quixotic ideas of unpractical genius would have to give way or the *Register* would be strangled in its birth. The circulating system of our great news agencies had gradually evolved and adapted itself to the requirements and conditions which have called it into existence, and it is doubtful whether in the whole range of commercial life another co-extensive field of service can be cited which works with such perfection, precision and absence of friction. Few men who read their weeklies early on the morning of publication - and it is with such we are dealing, since the dailies are necessarily circulated upon a system of their own - have any idea that between the printer and themselves their modest periodical has, in many cases, passed through five or six different houses, each of which has answered automatically to the order he left with his news-agent such an incredibly short time before. The simplicity of the system is based upon the supply of a demand which has been created by means and methods altogether

outside the sphere of the circulating houses. If the public have no knowledge of the intention to issue a publication - no matter whose name it may bear or what great influences may be behind it - there will be no orders left with the news-agents, no demand at the central agencies, no quantities to be delivered from the publication office, and no necessity for the printer to produce them. And the puny fiat of Harleston would fall like the unheeded mandate of Canute while the natural tide of distribution went on.

Pawley knew it when he set out, knew it, as he pointed out, when Harleston's insane determination was first explained to him. But the editor was a man whose suave exterior thinly masked an irascible tyranny that would rather shatter itself into oblivion than bend or yield when once his arbitrary will was formed. For years he had suggested Utopian ideas that would have wrecked the *Mirror* a hundred times if he had had his way, but Messrs. Levison were business men, and while his name as editor suited their purposes without too critical inquiry, they knew their own interests too well to allow him to interfere with outside matters. This had been the burr in Harleston's throat for which he had been seeking revenge, and at length his long-sought opportunity had arrived. The *Register* he could conduct upon his own methods, and the knowing Frog was about to teach the Ox a most salutary lesson. Under such circumstances, with such a man, we may perhaps better imagine than describe the scene that occurred when Pawley reported the result of his visit to several of the circulating houses.

'Zounds, sir!' cried the old man, leaping to his feet in an uncontrollable ebullition of indignation, as he caught the drift of Pawley's communication, and completely obscuring the point of his objection by the mad rush of his volubility. 'Zounds, sir! and have I lived - climbed so high, made such a position, only for you to bring me to this? Do I, do you, or who in the name of the contemptible devil is to be allowed to hold the proud and magnificent position I have carved out for myself, and which you have envied since the first hour I knew you? Who holds it, sir, I ask? Who holds it? Answer me!'

'Certainly you do.'

'Very well, sir, that is enough Let me hear no more of it. Oh soul of St. Patrick! To think the day should ever come when I - Michael Harleston should become the target of a lot of pine-skulled, paper-brained varlets, whose highest ideal is to take the greatest number of three farthings at a cash desk - a dirty, miserable - er - er - confoundedly miserable cash desk! We have been too long under the influence and led by the nose by this dirty and ignorant and incompetent crew. I will have no more of it! I will be another St. George - I will be St. George and St. Patrick in one! I will clear the land of both dragons and snakes, and put an end to the baseless slanders to which you have lent such a willing ear.'

'Excuse me, Mr. Harleston - ' cried Pawley indignantly.

‘I will not excuse you, sir. It would be – er – er - culpable, wilful and unpatriotic cowardice on my part to allow you to attempt to find an excuse for the conduct you are guilty of. These men, sir, these very men with whom you have entered into conspiracy - ‘

‘Mr. Harleston! I protest - ‘

‘Silence, sir,’ he yelled. ‘Your protests are as ignorant as yourself. These promoters of illustrated horrors, these artists in filth, these corruptors of our children, have hitherto held the reign of our whole commercial system, and have been driving the whole country to the devil. I have seen it, watched and taken note of it; and having done so do you imagine that I - Michael Harleston - whom this country has favoured, to her own honour, more than all her sons; am I, sir, with the intellect and ability with which God has so deservedly endowed me, and my country so justly recognised, now that the one opportunity in my long career has come, to sit complacently down and submit to their extravagant monopoly as the thousand noodles did who I am proud to follow?’

We must pardon the bull; it is a colloquialism for which he was scarcely responsible at the moment. Still he had gone on as far in this direction as Pawley cared to hear him, and he made a deft attempt to switch him off.

‘Of course we are in duty bound to do our best to correct abuses, but - ‘

‘But – but - there is no but, sir! The abuse exists! You have discovered it for yourself and therein gave evidence to the world of the judgment and prevision by which I saw in you a man of most unusual intellect and ability. But I regret, sir - most profoundly regret’ he was growing more temperate now – ‘that you should hesitate to join me in an attack upon this hydra-headed monster. But though I stand alone I will do it. This is no time to strike my flag! This is no time to sheathe my sword - my well-tried and trusty sword. No, sir! Now that I know my presence annoys this dragon, my sword shall flash in the sunlight of honest truth. Now war is declared and it shall be “war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt.” I will push this battle to the gate, and when I make my triumphant return you shall see the portals of this Gath upon my shoulders.’

Pawley had now given up any idea of changing his purpose as being entirely hopeless, but the inevitable result of such mad-headed folly was equally apparent. There was nothing left for him but to make the best of the circumstances into which he saw he would be plunged and try to minimise expenses while he attempted, should all other means fail, to secure a circulation in the only way open to him in conformity with general business principles, and the responsibility for which he would assume without permission, and trust to results for justification. In furtherance of this first plan he suggested, -

‘Then, considering the idea of advertising to be settled, I would venture to ask whether we might not distribute the eighty thousand copies you propose to post,

more economically and effectively by - ‘

‘No, sir, you cannot do anything of the kind. Do you imagine we are commencing our labours with an empty purse?’

‘No, but I am afraid it will soon be empty.’

‘That is his lordship’s matter, sir; and neither your business nor mine.’

‘You will excuse me, Mr. Harleston, but I should be untrue to myself if I did not say that there appears to be very little business about this in any way.’

‘It is not a business, sir, in the ordinary sense of the term, and I wish you at once to regard it as such; it is a purely philanthropic and benevolent proceeding on the part of his lordship for the benefit of the masses.’

‘So it may be; but unless we deal with it on a business basis we shall bankrupt the Bank of England if we are allowed to go on.’

‘That is for Earl Shenstone to determine. But so far as the posting of these copies are concerned I may explain to you that, in accordance with his lordship’s philanthropic motives, I have determined on this method of distribution because it will find temporary employment for ten or more indigent ladies to address the wrappers.’

‘But if you distribute among them the money you would pay for their services we can save the stamps and wrappers.’

‘And make the ladies recipients of pauper doles? No sir, the thought of such a suggestion makes me shudder with shame.’

It was no use. The editor was implacable, but all the same Pawley would have twenty thousand copies of the first number marked ‘Specimen’ and sent to the wholesale houses for distribution, and experience told him this would produce more fruit than the posted copies.

‘I should like to ask when you propose to publish.’ Harleston had had his way, and so was in the best of humours by this time.

‘That depends entirely upon yourself, my dear sir. I have no wish to be impatient, but it would be a great event if we could arrange it before the season ends, I can be ready for press in a week from now. That will enable us to publish say the second week in July.’

‘My dear sir, such a thing must be impossible.’

‘I can be quite ready in that time.’

‘Then it is time for me to prepare the paragraphs for the press. Now, Mr. Pawley, I will show these croaking reptiles what power and potency lies in the name of Michael Harleston to crush their vile combination.’

And Pawley left him to his labours very much of the opinion that the crushing

influence would be felt elsewhere than in the trade.

Chapter IX – A Friend In Need

Meanwhile our friends had comfortably settled themselves in their new home and were gradually being initiated into the peculiarities which London life presents. One of these proved to be particularly amusing in its bearing upon sociology. The house upon which their choice had fallen was situated in a road marking the boundary of two parishes - the 'residential' Dulwich and the 'artisan' Brixham, but fortunately it stood upon the side of the road included within the former 'desirable' district and was therefore all right. Had it been otherwise Ernest was amused to find he would have lost the distinctive privilege of being numbered among the elite of Snobdom, since the qualitative eligibility is rather geographical than intellectual or moral. There are striking exceptions to this general rule, but the man who can ignore it and succeed at once stamps himself as a most extraordinary individual.

We can readily understand with what a sign of relief Pawley assured himself that he had chosen the right side of the street, though the houses were built in pairs from the selfsame plan; but the incident may serve as a warning to others who may afterwards settle in the suburbs of London.

It was their second Sunday in Dulwich. Within five minutes of home was Brixham Common, one of the most popular resorts of the people south of the Thames, and its novelty offered irresistible attractions on a bright summer afternoon to a man of Pawley's temperament - fond of studying and mixing with the masses of his kind.

There is always enthusiasm, inspiration, revelation in the multitude of people; perhaps more to a thoughtful mind when it is quiet, orderly and leisurely than in the bustling turmoil of jubilation. In the one case the normal and intrinsic qualities may be contemplated and estimated, the depths and shallows of the nature may be judged, and whatever is within has an opportunity of rising to the surface and bearing silent and unsuspected witness to the character which forms the motive-power of life. A crowd in repose is a magnificent poem in which the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the power and weakness, the nobility and wretchedness of humanity are truthfully sung. In the other case the animal, thoughtless and vicious aspects of the individual are in riotous evidence, and base and brutish qualities bear false witness and slander the man who in his intoxication becomes incompetent to defend himself.

Brixham Common is a roughly wedge-shaped open space of some hundred acres in extent, lying with its base firmly planted against the line of Surrey hills and its apex cleaving and holding apart the rapidly-increasing neighbourhoods that abut upon it. It is truly a breathing space, one of the divisional lungs in the great metropolitan system, and gave evidence to Pawley, as he stepped upon it, how highly it was appreciated for the sake of the sweet and welcome breezes sweeping over the

hills from the country beyond, sealed and unknown to the unnumbered thousands who fret their lives away within the unescapable limits of the premier Christian city.

As Ernest looked around him he discovered that he had opened a new book, every line of which would thrill him with a lively interest, and every page burn another responsibility upon his consciousness. Like Paul looking around upon the greatness and blindness of Athens, his soul was stirred within him when he saw not one, but multitudes of temples - solitary, vacant, unoccupied, dilapidated - upon the despoiled facades of which was written in unmistakable language the legend 'To the unknown God.' It was painful to see the unuttered yet undeniable yearning for an unknown, an indescribable satisfaction which preyed upon the mind and with feverish gnawing starvation lurked in every feature and mutely appealed for help. These potentialities of the possible prophetic gleams of a distant future divinity, advance rays of a coming daybreak abnormally refracted, fall like harbingers of unrecognised mercy into the midnight of ignorance, and plough the callous mind into unrest. The light as yet is only enough to make their spiritual darkness visible, and in their uncertainty - conscious only of a desire to satisfy they know not what, to reach they know not whom - they grope their way and grip whatever they may touch, whether it be Agnosticism, Socialism, Anarchism; it is something, and they are so hungry, and their cry for bread so far has only been answered with stones. Oh the pity, the shame, the sin of it! And a cry of a spiritually famished humanity is rising heavenward with a thundering volume of intensity which drowns the chorus of the angels, and they stand aghast at the spiritual famine which the Church heeds not while she builds the garners of her affluence, and sentimentally garnishes the tombs of her prophets.

Are not the people more than empire, the children more than school-boards, men of more importance than ritual, and life of more value than doctrine? Listen, ye heedless cavillers, ye denominational enthusiasts, ye sticklers for open or closed communions, for adult or infant baptism, for one God or a Trinity, for a State or Free Church, for an Anglican as opposed to a Roman ecclesiasticism, do you not hear the voice of God's recording angel flying through the heavens and asking, 'Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry unto Him day and night?' What will be the value of your party strifes and contentions at the bar of God when you have to answer the charge of your neglect to the lost and outcast, and what shelter will your forms and ceremonies afford you when the King shall profess 'I never knew you; depart from Me ye that work iniquity'?

Some such thoughts as these troubled Pawley with a persistent presence as he threaded his way among the people, and yet this was but a fragment, a single drop out of the great ocean of London life. It only represented a tithe of the responsibility resting upon the shoulders of those who voluntarily or tacitly bore the name of Christ. The recognition of the fact and the equal carelessness with which the duty was collectively regarded appalled, terrified him. It had never been so vividly

brought to his mind before, and he positively sickened at the thought of it. A personal share of that awful responsibility rested with himself; yet what could he do alone, unaided, a stranger among men who in many instances were infinitely superior to himself in intellect and education? He had heard and read of the overpowering sensation of being alone in London - now he experienced it in all its crushing cruelty and helplessness. What could he do? There were many who would join him and give him help if he could only reach them - equally faithful servants of the Master as himself, but where were they, how could he find them? Then a voice within him said, Cry. 'But what shall I cry?' Open thy mouth and I will fill it. 'Freely thou hast received, freely give.' 'Inasmuch as ye do it to one of the least of these, ye do it unto Me.'

As this voice commanded he was conscious of a power enwrapping him, answering sympathetically to the silent cry of the people, and the dual influence was steadily carrying him out of himself upon the wings of an experience he could neither resist nor understand; it was like and yet unlike the forces which controlled him when the vision of the pavilion of God was opened before him; but now burning thoughts rushed through his mind, he was both clothed with and alarmed by a power of speech he knew would presently grow beyond his control, his lips were trembling with an utterance he dare not resist while yet he shrank, and like Jonah in his flesh he would have run away, but his feet were heavy, his eyes swam, he was bewildered and looked for a seat, and wished - oh how he wished that he was not alone.

Surely I am not mistaken - Mr. Pawley?

The sound of the voice reached him as from a tremendous distance, arresting his mysterious departure, for that he was advancing upon some unknown and unexplainable condition was beyond doubt. He paused, neither grateful nor regretting the interference, but simply with a mechanical desire to listen to the developing variations of the echoes as they passed along the galleries of his comprehension to reach and awaken his understanding. Then with a dreamy and irresolute voice he replied, 'Yes, I am Pawley,' as with no other purpose but to reproduce some similar sounds only to hear the effect repeated. The echo rolled away from him this time, and in its flight recalled him in a great desire to follow it, and he passed his hand across his eyes to wipe the bewilderment away.

It was the voice of his friend, Bernard Victor, at whose suggestion he had chosen Dulwich as a place of residence, that aroused him from his peculiar experience.

'Why - what's the matter?' asked Victor, as much surprised at his friend's appearance and indecision as at their unexpected meeting. 'You are not well.'

'Yes, I am all right now, thank you; but I think I had lost myself for the instant.'

'Well, now! Whoever would have thought of meeting you in Brixham, on a Sunday afternoon too! But I say, Pawley, I am sure you are not well!'

'I am, I assure you. You just caught me very deep in a brown study.'

'That's all right, then. But what are you doing in London?'

'Living here.'

'No! Where?'

'In the Lanstay Road.'

'What, in Dulwich?'

'Yes. Why not? I understood you to say it was a fairly good neighbourhood.'

'So it is. But I say, Pawley, this isn't one of your jokes, is it?'

'I think my presence should be a fairly substantial warrant against such an idea. Hang it, man, am I no more material than a ghost that you should doubt me, or have you some particular objection to my presence?'

'Neither the one nor the other, my dear fellow; it is rather because such an event is the gratification of one of my most ardent wishes that I doubt it. But come along for a walk and tell me all about it, for I tell you candidly I can scarcely believe it even now.'

Then arm in arm they leisurely strolled towards the top of the Common and Pawley explained the circumstances which had led to the change.

'Well, I'm not a rich man,' said Victor, presently, but I tell you honestly I would rather hear this than have twenty pounds. Since the first day I met you I have had a great desire to get you to London - such men as you are wanted here. Look at the hundreds - thousands of men and women now upon this Common. The great majority of them go nowhere, have little interest in anything outside their daily work, what little amusement they can afford, and a walk out here on Sunday afternoon.'

'It was in such thoughts as these I was lost when you found me. But is there no effort put forth to reach or interest them?'

'Absolutely none, apart from the occasional distribution of a bill inviting them to a special service in one of the neighbouring chapels; but what good is that? Many of these have already left the chapels in disgust, and they're not going back again to be preached at and have their experience repeated.'

'Are there no services held out here?'

'Not a single one.'

'Why? Are they prohibited?'

'No. Services and meetings may be held at this end within a defined area, and Secularists, Socialists and others have occasionally held meetings here, but the churches have never made the attempt.'

M.I. Rasser-Van Doorn 23-11-13 14:16

Opmerking [1]: This was written with 3 zeroes, not 2 os?

‘What is the reason?’

‘Simply lack of interest and “don’t care,” The fact of it is, our churches are getting too confoundedly respectable nowadays to have anything to do with open-air work, and to take an interest in, or make an inquiry respecting, another man’s spiritual condition is a vulgar presumption beyond all toleration. All that sort of thing is left to the parson and the pulpit, and we go to hear him simply to satisfy ourselves that he does something for the salary we pay him, then we lock the church up, and it is *infra dig.* to think of the subject again till next week. I tell you the shallow hypocrisy of London religious life as a system is something horrible for a thoughtful man to contemplate. There is plenty of talk, and lots of money being spent, but no work is done, no interest is shown, no effort put forth to do the real work for which the churches exist. The fact is, the dry rot has got into the whole concern, and spiritual work has gone to sleep, and no one wishes to be disturbed until the trumpet sounds calling us to glory. If anything did occur to break our slumbers, we might find some work to do, but the heirs of God, having been assured of the wealth of the heritage to which we hope to succeed, have retired from work, and so long as we satisfy the demands of the parson who watches our share and gives us a weekly assurance that it is all right, we have no necessity to trouble or inconvenience ourselves. This state of things was bad enough before Moody and Sankey came over, but in my honest opinion they made it far worse than they found it. Others may think they did good work, and I have no doubt but that they are perfectly honourable and conscientious, but they are also misguided men. They gave us a lot of hysterical emotionalism, raising a fever heat of excitement for the time, but the fever has abated now, and where is the lasting influence, where is the continuity of the revival? We are in a deeper sleep than ever. As a reward of the spasmodic effort put forth under the excitement of the moment, we have caught hold of Sankey’s songs more than Moody’s sermons, and on every hand we are singing: -

“Nothing either great or small,

Nothing, sinner, no;

Jesus did it, did it all

Long, long ago,”

It is a splendid lullaby, so grateful, so comforting, so full of rest and peace, especially when you hear the additional assurance that –

“Doing is a deadly thing,

Doing ends in death.”

Such a gospel is just what the weary and heavy laden of our churches were looking, hoping for; surely Moody and Sankey were heaven-sent to preach it! Who do you expect to risk their lives in working in the face of such a fatal alternative? No,

no! the last state of that revival is worse than the first; we have gripped firmly the one idea of doing nothing, and all we ask is to have such a gospel repeated.

“Sing them over again to me,

Wonderful words of life.”

‘Oh! Pawley, I tell you all this is a blasphemous travesty on religion, it is a veil of hypocrisy too thin to cover its own deceit, and there are scores - hundreds of people like myself who are looking to find a way from such shallow conventionality into a worship of God in spirit and in truth.’

‘I wish I could think your indictment was as false as it is severe, my friend, but the general facts, I am sorry to say, are too significantly in your favour. But the seeds from which this awful state of anaemic disorder springs are not of such modern sowing as you appear to imagine. The departure from Christ has in no sense been a revolt, but an imperceptible deflection, the following of an unconscious bias, the acceptance of a timely policy, the drifting attendant upon mistaken charity, and the desire to avoid unpleasantness with the powers that be. The “truth as it is in Jesus” began to be loosed from the Church almost before the death of the apostles, when contentions arose in councils to uphold the opinions of Polycarp against Anicetus, of Alexander against Arius, of Constantius against Athanasius, according to the minds and philosophies of men without any reference to the will of the Master whose servants they claimed to be. It was then the enemy sowed tares in the field, and from that time they have grown, prospered and increased. Always leaning to their own understanding has been the guiding principle - perhaps not so recognised and admitted at the time as history afterwards points out - the gradual deflection has unintentionally proceeded until we have come to do the things we ought not to do, and leave undone those things we are commanded to do, and the Church stands by and blesses the work in the name of Him we have all forsaken. By an imperceptible transition we have wandered from the straight and narrow way into the wilderness of theological confusion, accepting its chaos as a Divinely-established order, and the intellectual gloom of our so-called religious condition is supposed to be a merciful accommodation to our visual weakness, whereby we are only able to see as through smoked glasses. Centuries of continually-increasing error - with here and there a prophet of the Lord arising and pointing us back again, but practically forgotten almost as soon as gone - have produced the condition in which we stand to-day. What we want is a man to come to the bondage Church as Moses went to Egypt, and, despising everything, by his mandate from the God of the oppressed people, which will be visibly manifest in his works and deeds, lead us straight back to Christ. Let the temples of Egypt perish with their myths and ceremonies; let her canons and rituals crumble to decay with her philosophies and idols; let the speculations of schoolmen, and the strife-promoting dogmas of councils perish; let the flesh-pots and the spices of incense be forgotten, if only we may be led where the truth shall make us free, and the manna of heaven - the true Bread of Life - shall fall morning

and evening to nourish our hungry souls.'

'Yes, yes, we want a leader; but where shall we find him?'

'That is not either your work or mine, my friend, but God's. He will find His own men when the hour comes as He found Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah and Christ. Thank God there is always a remnant left who have not bowed the knee to Baal; it is our duty to find these and be with them, looking and waiting, while we work for the coming of the Lord. Others may be idle, but we must work, for the fields are already white unto the harvest.'

'Well, I'm not much good, Pawley; but something ought to be done and I'll do my best to help you.'

'All right, then we'll begin a service here next Sunday. Can you get any further help?'

'I think so. Where are you going to-night? Have you joined anywhere yet?'

'No; and to tell you the truth I'm almost afraid to do so for fear I should get entangled in a mesh of red-tape.'

'Well, will you come down to Mount Pisgah? We have a lot of young people who have been anxious for such a work for a year or two past. All we wanted was a leader. I can introduce you to several after service, and if we can do no more I am sure to secure some singers whether the person will help us or not; but I very much doubt that.'

'Who is your minister?'

'The Rev. Zaccheus Pinchbeck. You won't find him to be either a Spurgeon, a Parker or a Liddon. He is quite harmless, and always careful not to hurt anybody. Will you come?'

'Y-e-s. I think I will. I will meet you at the door.'

The arrangement did not leave a great amount of time at their disposal, so they parted to meet again in an hour.

Chapter X - The Premier Church

Mount Pisgah Church occupies a commanding position in the best part of High Street, Brixham. It rises suggestively a trifle higher and stands in scarcely perceptible isolation from the business houses by which it is almost surrounded, as if willing to be strictly neighbourly, yet avoiding familiarity, and accept civilities without condescension. There is no necessity to say it is the premier church in the district; that is at once too evident to admit of question. A comparison with the next, Ebenezer Chapel, a little lower down on the opposite side of the street, will settle any doubt on the instant, but when - for the sake of those who are not able to visit the

locality - we say it is just another case of mother and daughter, the relative position of the two churches will be easily understood in these progressive days.

The Ebenezer Chapel was built in the middle of the eighteenth century when Brixham was a small town miles away from London and its population were agriculturists, artisans and a few small shopkeepers. The pious founder was careful to provide for the spiritual welfare of such people, and the trust-deeds were drawn up with a view of maintaining his ideas of religion in perpetuity, in his simple-minded faith fashioning a mould in which the minds of the future should be cast and determined, not thinking that by the act he was introducing a system of spiritual bondage and preventing his fellows from apprehending God through the medium of a more developed intellectuality.

In the days of the Stuarts not a few men made their fortunes by the converting of well-favoured children into horrible monstrosities for the entertainment and amusement of the upper classes; and in a spiritual sense from the same period the trust-deeds of Nonconformity have been instrumental in producing nondescript and God-dishonouring creatures labelled Christian, which have driven earnest inquirers away and made a rampant agnosticism not only possible but the only consistent attitude for thoughtful mind to assume during a rational inquiry. What the world stands in need of to-day is a free, healthy, stalwart and consistent Christianity, appealing alike to head and heart, intellect and emotion, which while reaching after the unseen stands with its feet firmly planted upon a scientific rather than a doctrinal 'we know'; its evidences resting in its unspoken but natural appeals to the inherent powers shining forth from the lives of the disciples of the Christ, as they were evidenced in the Life of Lives, and promised to continue in order that 'by their fruits ye shall know them' - 'He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go to My Father.'

We want, this, the only true Christianity, back again, in the presence of which all cavillers were silenced and put to confusion; infinite, boundless, expansive and omnipotent as the domain of God the Father, affording room and opportunity for the unfoldment of every noble and poetic conception, and with the golden rule as the only recognised and orthodox standard. In such a spiritual demesne there is accommodation for all that is good and beautiful in Roman, Greek, English, Mohammedan, Hindu, or Free Church systems, each and all of which would shine the brighter if cleansed from unworthy and undesirable accretions. Oh that the faith of the angels was available in our unrecognised extremity that they might carry us in all our deformity and insensibility, lead us, in our blindness, back to the great physician, who 'seeing their faith,' would touch us, one and all, setting the crooked straight, and removing the beam from every eye, enabling us to see and recognise Him at whose feet we would fall with the universal exclamation - 'My Lord and my God!'

But we are dreaming - let us awake!

In the expansion of London, Brixham had been absorbed, its population increased, and the centre of the erstwhile little township formed the nucleus of a large trading district. The shops took on a metropolitan aspect, commercial and manufacturing enterprises were started in the neighbourhood, fortunes were made, men and women of pretension arose whose sons were educated at the public schools, and their daughters received attention in all the extras of costly finishing establishments, until Brixham began to boast an aristocracy peculiarly its own. Amid all these changes and improvements the Ebenezer Chapel had to stand still, bound hand and foot by trust-deeds, the home of fustian and simplicity, without the possibility of broadcloth, silks and intellect bringing about a reconstruction.

The incongruity of the position presented itself to the attention of one of the great magnates of the church, and being a keen business man, just retiring with an ample fortune, he seriously considered the matter with a view to overcoming the difficulty. At this time the air was beginning to be filled with the idea that the marvellous progress of human knowledge necessitated a further sub-division of studies, and specialities were becoming common in art, science, law and literature, as well as division of labour in the manufacturing world. In this our anxious religious pioneer discovered an inspiration - why not adapt the principles to the churches? It was not new as applied to ordinary education; universities admitted the distinction of degrees, which were only other names for certificates of grades of intellectual culture; why could not the Church be brought into line with modern progress, by some system of affiliated district groups in which individuals might be promoted as occasion or success made advisable? The scheme was an attractive one from many points of view; each church by confining itself to some special part of the religious system would be able to concentrate its efforts and attain a definite and economic proficiency; congregations would be instructed methodically and with approach to desirable consecutiveness; nebulous uncertainty as to the geography of the expected discourse would be to a great extent done away with; the assemblies in different places would be more upon the same intellectual plane, and more accessible to the influences of the preacher; all undesirable and irritating causes such as objectionable associations would be either entirely avoided or reduced to a minimum, and the great forces of the churches would be far more economically and advantageously employed. These are a few of the many alterations to be secured by such a system, which the originator very nervously whispered into the ear of a friend from whom he sought an opinion respecting it; this friend approved and brought in a third to have a further talk about the matter. Then a small committee was formed with power to add to its number, and as the idea expanded the numbers grew, and finally the scheme took practical shape in the building of Mount Pisgah Church.

The great desire of the committee was in all things to provide a church suitably adapted to the special requirements of the congregation for which it was designed and so faithfully was their work carried out that with the opening of Mount Pisgah, it was discovered that every possible necessity in the scheme of graduated churches

was fully provided for; agencies already existed towards which they might subscribe, and so discharge all other responsibilities which might rest upon them in relation to less favoured people. Stretching back through the great Wilderness of Sin, right away into the Egypt of bondage, were to be found camping grounds for the faithful where they might not only rest but worship; every need was provided for in the way that lay behind, but Mount Pisgah was a privileged spot. Sin was lost sight of, and before, the Jordan rolled between the hosts of the Lord and the blissful Canaan lying on that other shore - Jordan, where they were called upon to wait until the land of promise was ready to receive them - Jordan, that would be miraculously divided to save them damping their dress shoes and delicate costumes in passing. And while they waited in such rapturous expectation, their modern Moses would ascend the heights of the pulpit and report progress from time to time.

It was a beautiful conception, beautifully executed and maintained. Some people thought it a trifle exclusive, but the church was especially designed and built for the elect, it had no other purpose or cause for existence, was entirely unsuited for the requirements of any inferior people, only intended for those waiting to be translated, and built just where their waiting bodies could occupy it.

In the softening light of the early summer evening Pawley and his wife stood in the forecourt of the church, waiting the arrival of Victor and watching the stylish procession of silks and cambrics, cashmeres and poplins, lace and millinery, gallantly attended by white vests, patent leathers, delicate kid gloves and choice buttonholes, pass up the flight of broad steps, and turn to the right or left according to their appointed places. There was no trace of fear or trembling upon their joyous faces, no repentant sighs escaped their lips, no hesitating compunction, or doubt as to acceptance - no! no they were gathering at Mount Pisgah, not Mount Sinai; these were the favoured people come to keep holiday (we use the modern method of spelling as being preferable to the scriptural), therefore they come with happy faces to the scene of jubilation.

Then came a break in the gay monotony. An old woman, clothed in the well-known garment of our Christian charity, needing assistance, but finding none pulled herself up the step from the footpath to the forecourt, and laboriously approached the entrance. She did not crowd on those in advance of her, and those behind very thoughtfully gave her room. At the lower step she paused just to gather sufficient strength to climb, but the time she evidently required could not be spared just then, since other and more dainty costumes were kept in waiting. At this a diagonal coat with a geranium buttonhole, standing as janitor, hurried down the steps and lent the poor intruder strength to step aside.

'Have you not made a mistake? Don't you want the Little Zion in the railway arches?' he inquired.

The movement was made with more celerity than the poor old soul was accustomed to - evidently waltzing was not her particular forte - and she became

nervous and alarmed.

‘Eh! Is there anything the matter?’

But the janitor had no time for argument just then. A pair of spirited horses harnessed to a luxurious brougham were suddenly reined up at the gate, and he flew to attend to the arrival of the senior deacon and his daughter.

The old woman looked round in amazement, and seeing Pawley close beside her inquired, -

‘Isn’t this the chapel, sir?’

‘It is a chapel,’ he replied, ‘but I don’t think it is the one you want. The gentleman thinks you would get on better at the Mission Room.’

The portly deacon swept by with a glance of withering scorn at the speaker who was so unmindful of appearances.

The glance struck Pawley with much the same effect as a bowman’s shaft would glance from the armour of a rhinoceros, but with the old woman standing still doubtfully beside him, he recalled certain hints he had received from Victor, and his active mind began to employ itself in an attempt to weave from the things he had heard and seen some probable conception as to what he would find this church to be. So far he could only conceive it to be an establishment of cold, repellent pretension, an artistic but fearful example of the extent to which the soulless ‘form of godliness’ may be ingeniously carried without provoking censure, a monument of doctrinal architecture erected to show how far the name of Christ could be dragged with approval into the domain of the world. The genealogy of the place could no doubt be traced back through tortuous windings to the fount of truth, as the existence of Neptune may be theoretically resolved to the parentage of the sun; but the distance it has covered in its wanderings has so estranged it ever from its nearest neighbour as to make it separate and distinct in everything but its origin. So did Mount Pisgah appear to have wandered in everything from the manger-cradle in which the first inception of Christianity is displayed, and the enormous extent of the deflection can only be estimated when the one is placed side by side with the other.

But as yet Pawley was only standing without the place of assembly; he must needs enter before he could understand all that Victor inferred when he said the dry rot had got into the church. He felt this in its full force presently when he entered the building, and, came more immediately into contact with that subtle pervading atmosphere which partakes of the essence of individuals and compounds the real spirit of the congregation. It smote him with a keener disappointment than he had anticipated. Lacking the animation of a concert, the intellectual expectation of a lecture, or the appreciative admiration of a flower-show, it was a promiscuous grouping of fashion in frigid classic repose, brought together for conventional display, and competitively to pose in various attitudes during the performance of an arranged programme, then depart to criticise the show and its appointments.

This was the psychometric reading of the atmosphere into which Pawley was introduced for worship - the normal spiritual temperature of Mount Pisgah Church.

He had already put far away from his mind any idea of a spiritual feast, and his hope was turned towards the possibility of an intellectual discourse, but here again he was doomed to a second disappointment. The law providing for a man reaping that which he has sown likewise determines that he shall also receive whatsoever he asks for, but the sowing or asking consists not necessarily in a verbal formula so much as in a consistent and persistent attitude and conduct of life. The church at Mount Pisgah had no consciousness of any great spiritual need, neither did they care to disturb themselves with any great intellectual activity; they rather preferred to wait in patience and reserve any effort for the passing of the Jordan in order to enter upon their heritage free from any sense of weariness. In the Rev. Zaccheus Pinchbeck they had a man who in no way distressed them. He evidently knew his people - sensitive, fashionable, considerate, and he ministered mechanically to their requirements. In dress and manner he was an exquisite; to satisfy the High Church proclivities of certain young ladies he had cultivated a nasal drawl as a 'most bewitching clerical attainment;' for the sake of business and professional men he carefully avoided argumentative discourses, and so allowed the Sabbath to be the day of rest it was originally intended; and for the benefit of matrons who delighted in promenade and social civilities (!) he was always considerately brief. But for the hungry, the penitent, the wayward - well, they had no business at the church. It was not built or intended for such people, and if they insisted on going and were disappointed they alone were to blame; it is outrageous to think a whole congregation might be disturbed for the consideration of an occasional interloper.

Pawley was painfully bored with the whole performance, finding no interest in anything but the benediction, after which he rose to reach his hat with the wish that he had escorted the old woman to the Little Zion.

Where was she, by-the-bye? Was it possible the janitor found her a seat after all? Pawley hoped not, for if she was needing good he was sure she had not fared sumptuously at Mount Pisgah.

He reached out his hand to wish Victor good-night.

'Just wait half a minute,' he requested; I want to introduce you to one or two of our young fellows.'

'I don't think it would be any good,' he replied; your church is scarcely the nursery to produce open-air preachers. I think I shall have to try nearer the railway station.'

'I am not surprised at your opinion, my friend,' he answered despondently; but doesn't our extremity appeal to your sense of need? I told you the dry rot was in the church, but I carefully refrained from saying much of our condition because I was anxious you should see it for yourself. But we are not all so dead as you may imagine; there are a few names still in Sardis who have not yet defiled their

garments - young fellows whose enthusiasm has not yet been stifled by the grip of formalism; a small band who meet to pray for the coming of a leader who shall bring life again into the valley of death. Are such as these not the men you want? May not your coming be the answer to their prayers? The people up the way are all right in comparison to us; they have to fight and struggle forward, their very nearness to the furnace of affliction works for their salvation -

“Trials make the promise sweet,

Trials give new life to prayer;”

but as a congregation we are free from the grinding cares and trials of life; the majority of our people have their bread for many a long day at the bank or laid up in Consols, they are in a position to say complacently, “Soul, take thine ease,” and you see the result - whited sepulchres, silken-clad lepers, ostentatious hypocrites! Pawley, when Christ was here, He did not use His healing powers so much on cases of headache, toothache and corns, as upon leprosy, aberration of mind, possession of devils, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the dead, and the uttermost of extremity. Mount Pisgah is a lazaret house; it is a colony living among the tombs of a dead past, with but few lingering traces of a rapidly expiring, life. Don't blight the hopes your coming has revived, and turn away before I have had time to thank God for your arrival!

Victor spoke with not a little impassioned entreaty which attracted the attention and surprise of several as they passed by. Still he was alike oblivious and careless of their criticisms. His soul was certainly not dead, and though the instrument of rescue might neither be great nor powerful, it was something, and he was determined not to let it go without an effort. As he spoke two of the little band to whom he referred came nearer and were drawn into an adjoining seat where they learned the cause of his anxiety, and without waiting for any formal introduction joined their entreaties to his own.

“Very well; let us see if it is possible to do anything. I have not much hope, but this is the work that has come to my hand and I will not turn away until we have given it a trial. The Master is certainly able to do more than we can even ask or think, but apart from that I tell you I should never enter these doors again. What shall we do?”

Then followed introductions and explanations, and it was at once suggested that Victor should see Pinchbeck before he left and ascertain what hope there was of gaining an official sanction to the proposal; other details could easily be arranged.

After the fatigue of the service Mr. Pinchbeck usually rested in his vestry under the ministering attendance of his wife and such other ladies as were privileged to share the not altogether unpleasant duties. It was just a quiet social time which the ladies used to congratulate and eulogise him while he unbuckled his armour and laid his arms aside - a recuperation and resuscitation of which he stood in need, as well as allowing the congregation to disperse before his presence in the street might

attract undue attention.

Victor apologised for intruding to introduce Mr. Pawley.

‘You must pardon any apparent lack of cordiality in my welcome to-night,’ drawled the preacher; I am too exhausted after the service to receive visitors, but if you will call upon me on Tuesday afternoon at three o’clock, I shall be pleased to see you. What church are you from?’

‘Cross Lane, Cottominster,’ replied Pawley, laconically, and for his part the interview would have ended there, for Pinchbeck was more unbearable in his private than public capacity.

‘I have no doubt Mr. Pawley might be pleased to see you at such a time in respect to his transfer,’ volunteered Victor, but my reason for seeing you to-night is that he is about to join some of our young fellows in commencing an open-air service on the Common next Sunday and -

‘Not from Mount Pisgah!’ he gasped.

‘Why not?’ Pawley asked with a calmness all the more marked in contrast with the preacher’s alarm. Is not Mount Pisgah a Christian church?’

‘Oh, yes! but you see it is not exactly a mission church - that is, we contribute towards the support of agencies who do that sort of thing for us.’

‘I thought you said there were no services on the Common?’ he inquired of Victor.

‘I did not say on the Common,’ Pinchbeck exclaimed. You see individual churches cannot do everything, so we divide our labours.’

‘And do you also subsidise an agency to answer for your neglect of duty at the bar of Christ?’

‘You are inclined to be facetious, sir,’ simpered the preacher. ‘I think you could do your proposed work much better from Ebenezer Chapel. You will find that more like the church you have been in communion with. Is there anything more I can do for you?’

‘No, sir; I am not in search of favours or patronage either.’

Victor was afraid that his hopes would be dashed after all, so at once intervened to explain Pawley’s connection and position, well knowing the influence the mention of Lord Shenstone’s name would produce.

‘Why did you not tell me this before?’ asked the, minister, apologetically. Pray take a seat, Mr. Pawley.’

‘No, thank you; I am not here as a servant of Lord Shenstone, who I am sure would be pleased to learn with what respect you desire to treat me on his behalf; I am still here as the servant of Christ, for whom you apparently have no courtesies to offer.’

'I am afraid you fail to distinguish the essential features of metropolitan Christianity, and from lack of knowledge you unwittingly do us some trifling injustice.'

'Excuse me, Mr. Pinchbeck, but Christianity, as I understand it, is the same in the metropolis as in the provinces, in Jerusalem as in Nazareth, in London as in Cottominster. It has one fixed standard, not an adjustable sliding scale, and is identical in Westminster Abbey, St. Peter's in Rome, Mount Pisgah Church or Cross Lane if it is the real article; if not I have no use for it.'

'Really, you would almost strike me as another Luther in disguise,' ventured the still discomfited parson, who was anxious in any way to conciliate a man with such connections. But you have no idea how many men come to us in London wearing the cloak of profession for unworthy motives; and the continual experience tends to make us over cautious, perhaps, with strangers until we have established their *bona-fides*.'

'And you accept Lord Shenstone and Mr. Harleston as sponsors in my case?'

'Most assuredly I do.'

'I thought so! They stand well with the world and have a much more weighty authority with you than my transfer from a church where I have been working for years. The Master did not hold the world in such superior estimation in His day. I think I shall be more comfortable at Ebenezer, Mr. Pinchbeck. Good-night!'

'You are inclined to be too hypercritical,' returned the preacher, without noticing the extended hand. I must see you again upon these points when I am not so fatigued. But now - with respect to this service - I am almost afraid that Mr. Foxleigh will oppose the idea.'

'Oh, don't trouble any more about that; dismiss it from your mind. I shall begin them next Saturday without any reference to your church.'

'Very well, Pawley; I am tired of this continual objection to every proposition we make,' said Victor. Hundreds of people have been driven from these doors by this same dog-in-the-manger exclusiveness. If you begin I and others will be with you, and Mount Pisgah may go hang!'

'But if you take our young people you will be regarded as representing us.'

'I cannot be responsible for that,' replied Pawley. The day has gone when any church can be the slave-holder of the minds of men, and if anyone chooses to break away from your oppression what power have you to prevent it? Still you need not be alarmed that we shall be thought to represent you; if my estimate of your church is correct our very presence on the Common will give the lie to such an idea at once.'

'You entirely misunderstand my meaning,' said the vacillating and fearful Pinchbeck, if you think I have any wish to oppose any good work you may wish to do in the neighbourhood. It is much needed, and I shall be only too glad to further it.'

But the idea is so new, so unthought of in connection with our church, that I am altogether unable to consider it apart from Mr. Foxleigh and Mr. Blake. I will mention it to them in the morning and will drop you a line.'

Now Victor knew the deacons as well as he knew the parson, and surmised that Pawley's connections would be equally powerful with them as with him, and at once suggested, -

'Can we meet Mr. Foxleigh with you? Time is important and we cannot wait.'

'He would object without an appointment.'

'Then we will say no more about it,' replied Pawley, who had continued the useless argument already much longer than he was inclined to do.

'But do you not see that the responsibility of refusing your request is far greater than I can take upon my own shoulders? Mr. Foxleigh might see reasons I do not apprehend. Let me arrange an appointment.'

'We will meet you at his house in the morning,' replied Victor, and if he will see us - well. If not our commencement next Sunday will not be prevented.'

'I am afraid he would think such an action was an attempt to coerce him.'

'Very well,' cried Pawley, altogether out of patience, 'I am tired of this hive-hovering and red-tape. I will do it if I have to stand alone.'

'Let me ask you not to be quite so impetuous,' remonstrated Pinchbeck. You are not acquainted with Mr. Foxleigh or you would sympathise with the difficulty in which I am placed. Perhaps it would be better for you to meet me at his house at ten o'clock and I will ask him if he will see you.'

'I won't promise, but we will talk it over,' replied Pawley, and if we determine to accept your suggestion we will meet you.'

Pinchbeck was very much disturbed at the matter being left in such an unsatisfactory state. He knew his senior deacon, and when the straws of circumstances were crossed Samuel Foxleigh was not altogether lamb-like, and the thought of the possibilities of the morrow was not a pleasant contemplation. Pawley was too much disgusted to wish to have anything more to do with the matter, but Victor was thinking of the young men who had been waiting and praying so long. If this opportunity slipped by another such might not come again, and he was determined it should not be lost for his lack of trying. Elinor added her influence to his entreaties, and so, before they parted, it was arranged to meet Pinchbeck and hear Foxleigh's decision.

Chapter XI - A Glance At The Stewardship Account

The parable of the Unjust Steward, taken as a simple story told by an honest

preacher to a matter-of-fact congregation, free from all theological entanglements and mystification, contains a very suggestive warning to us in this daybreak of the twentieth century if we will carry it into our closet, and, having shut the door, ask and seek only for the light of God to fall alike upon our minds and the story while we read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest its meaning.

At stated periods honourable men engaged in commercial pursuits make inquiry to ascertain their position; a careful account of stock is taken, investments are examined, outstanding accounts are surveyed, and every phase of the business is probed in each minute particular until assets can be faithfully and clearly set beside liabilities and a balance struck showing the financial position even to the fraction of a penny. This is the necessary diligence required to give stability to commercial life, without which trade and commerce would become a chaotic confusion and business a haphazard gamble rather than a systematised science.

Still it must not be forgotten, that when the stocktaking is concluded and the account-sheet audited and passed, all houses equally sound and satisfactory do not show the same amount of profits on the transactions of the year, for the simple reason that all concerns are not of equal capacity, but the expected returns are based proportionately upon the capital available being employed to the best advantage. This is only reasonable. Colossal enterprises must produce colossal results if they are to remain solvent, but a modest business will be equally satisfactory with comparatively moderate gains. In this fact we discover that true commercial principles have their foundations laid in a law obtaining in the spiritual as well as in the natural world - 'unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required,' and upon this basis the conclusion of the parable referred to is drawn. The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.'

Now, when Christ uses this simile of stewardship as an illustration to His disciples and the people who throng around Him - commending the unjust steward for the tactfulness he displays - surely He wishes to instil into His hearers an idea of the watchful care in the management and employment of the gifts with which He is about to endow them in their stewardship of the merchandise of souls. But lest we may not be quite clear upon the point we had better remind ourselves of the somewhat kindred parable of the Talents, which leaves no trace of doubt as to what was in the mind of the Master as to our duty and His expectations.

Having now recalled the principle upon which certain endowments were to be made, and the relationship in which His disciples were to act as stewards towards Himself as the representative of the Father, we may also refresh our memories as to the purpose for which His capital was to be used. Fortunately this is so explicitly stated as to leave no possibility of doubt - 'As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you.' Our employment and stewardship is then to carry on His work. What is this? The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the

captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' How is this to be done? We make the inquiry because it being Christ's business - and we only workers together with Him,' stewards in charge - it is our duty to do His will and obey His commands. Now His desire and wish is thus expressed: That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us;' or, as Paul understood it, we are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundations of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.' If this means anything it is that there is to be such a union and likeness between the disciple and Christ and God that 'he that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me;' we are to live and yet not we but Christ to live in us. Christ is the type into which we are designed to be transformed.

It is necessary thus carefully to feel our way forward in order that we may fully understand our position, our duty, our stewardship, and the capital which has been invested for our employment.

First then the Church is to be a holy temple in which the Lord and His Christ shall find habitation, and by a paradox of holiness there is to be such a union established that to see the one is to see the other also.

What is to be the use of this temple?

To supply every need of every human soul by the breaking of the Bread of Life.

It is a colossal conception. What is the capital available for carrying it out?

'All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth,' and 'Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' Neither is this investment to be of a temporary nature; the account is to run until the work is accomplished. It is very important this should be made clear and borne in mind This 'all power' is for all stewards - 'He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also.' Again - 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . . and these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' But 'there shall arise many false Christs,' and not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.'

Such is an abstract of the title-deeds of the gospel in its simplicity and foundation, and with this fresh in our minds let us take a glance of both sides of the ledger account and ascertain what would be our position as a solvent concern if we were to hear the voice of the Lord, as the twentieth century dawns, saying, 'How is it that I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship.'

We start with twelve men endowed with this 'all power,' an infinite amount of capital invested to produce a finite result. But the Investor is not mercenary because His omnipotence is perfect. He needs only to speak and whatever He saith is done.

Then why not speak and secure His purpose in the salvation of the world?

Simply for the sake of the creature. He wishes to make men; and men cannot be produced by mechanical or arbitrary processes; they are unfoldments from weakness to strength by reason of the pilgrimage of conquest; of wisdom out of ignorance through the necessity of toil; of nobility from meanness by the potentiality of conscience; by the discovery of divinity within humanity through the exercise of love. In other words the Investor wishes to raise humanity to His own standard, and the plan is devised and endowed altogether for this one purpose - therefore this colossal expenditure to produce such a moderate return. Mark the grace and the boundless liberality of God to us; how much greater is He that is for us than all who are against us.

But where is this 'all power' to-day?

That is the question. It has never been withdrawn, will have to be accounted for; the responsibility for its non-employment will fall somewhere, the talent must produce its expected usury whether it is buried or heedlessly, lying aside. But let us proceed. Twelve men receive this power of practical omnipotence over sin and its consequences for the benefit of and transmission to all mankind, and in the day of its bestowal one man, Peter, in the exercise of the gift, secures an addition of 'about three thousand souls,' to their number. Still we will avoid all extravagant calculations, and suppose that each of these men secured one single convert in the space of twelve months, and these each secured another, every convert bring one soul as the result of his year's labour. How long would it require to convert the world? assuming the population to be equal to its present estimate. The prophecy of Christ was a very liberal one: 'Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled,' for if the population of earth was twice its present number such a rate of conversion would have accomplished it within thirty years, allowing for the ordinary death-rate. But nineteen centuries have rolled by and not more than a fifth of the peoples of the earth have yet even nominally acknowledged the Christ of God. Why is it? Who can account for it? Is this a satisfactory stewardship? We have still the same God, the same Jesus, the same gospel and the same power available - all these are 'the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.' What is the cause of this failure of Christianity?

Astounding and appalling as this may appear we have yet to bear in mind that to obtain this disappointing aggregate of nominal Christians we have to include the Roman, Greek and Morman communions with Anglican and all Protestant divisions. In these, however, we have no desire to make invidious distinctions; each and all send their representatives heavenward, and have a right to be included as they will also have to share the responsibility and condemnation. But this estimate encloses

the entire population of the British Isles - drunkards, gamblers, criminals, harlots, with all ranks and conditions of men and women as being followers of the Lord's Christ.

Is this a satisfactory audit? Yet the figures are incontrovertible. The accusation stands honestly undeniable, and the facts are so patent that 'he who runs may read.' The work that might have been accomplished within a single generation is not yet more than one-fifth, and that very half-heartedly secured after an effort of nineteen centuries. Is this a result to be proud of? Ought it not to be a cause of most penitential humiliation and cries for forgiveness?

Of course a thousand voices will clamorously deny the statement without stopping to ask whether it is true or otherwise, and a hundred side issues will be raised in apology or explanation, but to such we at once reply with a repetition of the facts, merely adding that with nine hundred millions of Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans and Confucians alone we need to pause and think.

Others will come forward and parade a list of magnificent and saintly men and women from different communions for whose lives the earth is considerably the better, but even these exceptions have not reached the full standard of Christian possibility, and while we are devoutly thankful for the influences they have exerted, we are also conscious of the illustration they afford of how far short of the full stature is the ordinary Christian professor in comparison with such saints. But are such men and women the products of the systems of theology or are they not evidences of what the power of Christ can accomplish in spite of the systems? Would Protestants select Francis of Assisi rather than Hildebrand as a representative of the Roman Church? Who among Armenians would put Spurgeon forward as a type of Calvin's doctrine? Are all Anglicans to be estimated by Keble? all Methodists by Wesley? all Presbyterians by Chalmers? or Mystics by Pulsford? Were not such men, like the prophets of old, called out from the mediocrity of their creeds and placed like cities standing upon the hill-tops, lighting the way upward towards the latitudes of health and strength from which we have fallen. Let us be honest, brethren; these men at their best are only improvements and fall as far short of the full stature of Christ as they stand above ourselves. Better than, and in spite of, their creeds, they reached out after the Master, but when the standard is placed beside them - 'He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also' - we see that good as they were they were only 'unprofitable servants.' The 'faith once committed to the saints' should have made them like the heroes of old 'who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' This is the faith of Christ; where is it with its mighty signs and wonders for which the kingdoms of the world are hungering?

Neither the laws nor the purposes of God have changed, Christ has not changed,

the gospel has not changed, the possibilities of His promises are now available as ever, and the needs of humanity have not lessened; then where are the evidences – ‘these signs shall follow them that believe?’

Lost!

How - why?

Because humanity has not changed. The things temporal have more influence over the mind of man than the things eternal; present realities hold us with a stronger grip than promised eventualities can break; we are afraid to fall lest the everlasting arms should not be underneath. ‘Oh! ye of little faith!’ and the Church is with the world among the pigmies. Whether in the Church or outside, likeness to Christ asks too much, restrains too much, insists on too much sacrifice. ‘He gave Himself for us’ - that is all very well and we may be grateful for it; it was noble and self-sacrificing of Him to do it; but when it is insisted that ‘because He laid down his life for us . . . we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren’ it becomes a very different matter, and even the Church hath not ears to hear such a command, or if we hear we are not able to understand. It was so in the days of Christ and so it remains to-day. It was the religious world, not the common people, that cast Him out and crucified Him; it was the Church more than the world who would not have Him to reign over them - Barabbas was preferable, not being so exacting. History repeats itself, and it requires no long argument to substantiate the fact. We are as willing to-day as ever to accept all that God will give us, but a gift is not a gift if we have to make a return, and ‘God giveth liberally and upbraideth not,’ so the enthusiasm of the apostles died away in their disciples, and with the self-denial the power of God died away from the Church.

The old wine of priestly rule was soon insinuated into the new bottles of the kingdom, and the successors to those who were dethroned from Moses’ seat were soon usurping the authority of the Greater Leader of a spiritual Israel, and when Constantine conceived the idea of political advantage by giving State recognition to a persecuted Church the road was paved for an overwhelming pagan adulteration. ‘But what concord hath Christ with Belial?’ ‘Come out from among them and be ye separate’ had been the Divine command to the Church as regards relationship with the world; ‘In the world but not of the world had been the attitude of the Christ; out of darkness into the light of life was the way she was to take. Alas! alas! to escape from the storm of persecution she turned further out of the way, and the clouds of her trial deepened into the long dark night of the Mediaeval ages.

The darkness blinded her eyes; she still worshipped, but it was at the shrine of the god of this world; ‘all power’ she regained, but apparently she did not discover that this was a temporal rather than a spiritual dominion; a temple was built, but it was of the earth earthy; its corner stone was a Pope instead of Christ; the indwelling spirit with which she became identified was that of a man rather than the Lord of Hosts. God had spoken, and a decree of a council banished Him as unnecessary and

inconvenient to His throne in the heavens; Christ had risen, and it was fitting that He should be seated at the right hand of the Father on high. Certainly He had made the Church a promise: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,' but the Pope had secured the keys both of heaven and hell and could equally unlock the doors as Christ's proxy. Really the whole business was all arranged – 'why trouble the Master?' and the Church went down and down, having the name but not the spirit, an exalted pretension but none of the evidences which were committed to her trust.

Regarded as a human institution the Church did noble and heroic work during those centuries of ignorance and superstition. First, true to herself and her own interests she held the minds of all men in bondage, lest the light of intellect should lead to revolt. Learning is power, and this she carefully locked up in her secret institutions, and for the spiritual good of the people at once crushed all unauthorised developments. But apart from this she held the balance of power between rival nations; adjudicated between serf and lord and monarch with a laudable approach to equity; insisted upon the protection of the weak by the strong; gave to the workman at least a comparatively comfortable living on the land where he was born; protected his rights, watched over his property, and since all the wealth could at will be drawn into her coffers she dispensed largesse liberally. She was physician, schoolmaster, lawyer, statesman and kingmaker, and in the human sense, according to her light, did not compare unfavourably with modern political institutions.

But at length 'the morning star of the reformation' arose. The shutters of ignorance had prolonged the night, but the joints were giving way and the light shone through. The Pope and Church had the name but God the power. The fiat had gone forth, 'and there was light.' It broke through gates, the key of which is missing from St. Peter's ring, and with the daybreak the earth of the Church trembled.

But what a revelation did the morning bring! What mythical transformation had been performed during the night! Men broke in disgust away from the idea of traffic in souls for money, but centuries of superstitious control had impaired the reasoning faculties and rendered minds incapable of understanding in those early hours the misshapen deformities which debasing creeds had produced. A Papal authority was partially overthrown, but the emancipated ones at once bound themselves to a supposed infallible book, and with that doubtful change in the form of a ruler were content to abide for the most part in the errors of the night. God is still silent, having once spoken, and our intellect has not yet sufficiently recovered to remember that 'whatsoever the Lord doeth it shall be for ever;' that 'He changeth not, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' that 'that the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.' If this is true, God still speaks, and what He now says is quite as authoritative as that He said centuries ago, and perhaps may be even more important. It is only the telephone that is out of order.

Next, the Christ we were instructed to follow - our Leader and Example who gave us commandment: 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you,' the Christ who bade us work because only they who '*do* the will of God shall enter into the kingdom,' the Christ who bade us be watchful and faithful stewards - has gone and we have another Christ - a substitute who has done everything for us has been left in His place. Listen: -

Nothing either great or small

Nothing, sinner, no;

Jesus did it, did it all

Long, long ago.

It is finished, yes, indeed

Finished every jot.

Sinner, this is all you need

Tell me is it not?

Or yet again: -

Not saved are we by trying,

From self can come no aid;

'Tis on the blood relying,

Once for our ransom paid.

'Tis looking unto Jesus,

The only One and Just,

'Tis His great work that saves us;

'It is not try but trust.'

Beside such a doctrine we have only to place His own injunction, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate,' and 'work while it is called to-day,' to realise how credulity has usurped the place of faith and how far we have wandered from the 'way, the truth and the life.'

The fiction of dogma has destroyed the safeguards of the vineyard and given a free entrance to those fortune-hunters who have no wish either to know the Lord's will or to do it. The result is the Church has a name to live but is dead.

Of course an appeal will at once be made to the advance of civilisation as a denial of the proposition. But can the Church unblushingly put in a claim to being the champion of science and progress? Has she the power - the Anglican Church? Then why does she not put an end to the disabilities under which she groans to-day - the ritual question and jurisdiction over her own affairs. The Free Churches? Then why do they not shake off their disabilities and stand on an equality with the Establishment? Was Rome to be credited with assistance to Luther and the reformation? Was also the Christian faith to be credited with the civilisation of Egypt and Chaldea, Greece and Rome? Rather say that civilisation is what it is in spite of the hindrances the Church has thrown in its way, but the traces of barbarity and brutality which still remain might have been cleansed and obliterated centuries ago had the Church been faithful to her stewardship and not denied her Master.

But enough of this. Let us close this stocktaking inquiry by harking back and making a comparison between what might have been and what is. In the days of Ahab, when Israel had forsaken the Lord, Elijah appeared and gathered the people unto Carmel. We know the result. One true man with God was more than the whole nation with eight hundred false prophets thrown in. In the time of Darius, Daniel was more than all the wise men of Babylon, and came uninjured from the lions' den. The prisons of Galilee and Philippi were opened in answer to prayer, and Peter and Paul were saved. At the present moment we are sorrowing over the cold-blooded massacre of scores of missionaries in China. We knew their danger, and on their behalf England, America, Germany and Italy besought heaven day and night to save and protect them. Christ promised 'And all things whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name shall be done unto you.' It was not done. Where was the endowment of 'all power?' 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.' God has not changed. In spite of our prayers the helpless missionaries fell. Why? The fact demands an answer. Ye who can, speak out!

Chapter XII - Samuel Foxleigh, Deacon

By profession Samuel Foxleigh was known as a 'Christian philanthropist' - the adjective is used advisedly since there are philanthropists of less distinction, just as in the army there are officers other than those of the cavalry. Nor is the description so vulgarly ostentatious as may at first appear, since it was rather conferred upon him than employed. If choice had been allowed he would have been known as a 'consulting specialist,' but jealousy forbade and suggested only an opprobrious term as an alternative which he haughtily refused and bowed to circumstances.

It was singularly unfortunate for his early career that the ancient pedigree of his distinguished family, with all estates and proud distinctions thereto belonging, had by fraud or negligence been transferred to others, and he was therefore compelled to

make his *debut* in most humble guise. 'Still truth will out and blood must tell, in conformity with which axiom his proud aspirations early revealed to him the fact that the tides which flowed through his own arterial system were as anciently connected as the bluest of England's blood, and his bold, courageous if not exactly princely bearing helped him towards distinction.

His father was Stephen Waggles, herbalist and dreamer, residing in a by street in Hoxton, a man possessing a certain amount of crude genius, which he exercised in reverie while gathering herbs, and afterwards proceeded to develop his schemes while drinking, but never in a more practical form than to be able to draw a few shillings on account of a prospective fortune from any available and unsuspecting dupe. Sophy Waggles exercised her wits in disposing of herbs, as far as possible, from the emporium in the window corner of the composite dining and drawing room, to which occupation she added the more profitable, yet still unremunerative, art of knitting. She differed strangely in her temperament from her husband's easy-going nature, and frequently their matrimonial disputations were attended by somewhat striking illustrations. In such atmosphere and surroundings the lad grew up until fate and other events robbed him of his mother, after which his father allowed him to graduate with all available honours in the University of the Gutter, and by the time he reached his teens he had knowledge of 'a few things' he could use to advantage. Every day in the street without a change grew irksome to him, so he joined a Sunday School, where he succeeded in attracting attention, then obtained a nomination to a charity institution from which he emerged able to look after himself generally.

He was on the way to success, and every step gained served to whet his resolution the more. He had shaken off the incubus of his father, and with the greed of a miser hoarded his earnings and watched with the eyes of a lynx for every available advantage to improve his condition. He had to conquer the world, and in the struggle to do it he frequently found some of his old-time gutter experiences usefully suggestive, and perhaps none more so than the simple arithmetical mnemonic that number one stands first. That proposition he never forgot nor infringed; in fact, he raised it to the height of a cardinal principle at the shrine of which he rendered all the worship he could afford. It was the one idea of his life, and he carried it out with exemplary devotion, and of course met with his reward.

Steadily if slowly he pushed his way forward until, passing the year of his majority, he was earning a decent living in addition to the weekly amount he first laid by. Then his father discovered his whereabouts and at once waited upon him to borrow five pounds upon the plea that he had perfected an idea in which there lay a fabulous fortune.

Harry had heard such tales before. Still he knew his father possessed a certain amount of genius, and had always recognised the possibility that he might strike something practical some day of which advantage might be taken. He therefore

thought for a moment, then determined to risk the meal the old man stipulated for as an introduction to an explanation, which, shorn of poetical embellishments, was briefly as follows.

He had come to a satisfactory conclusion that all the ills flesh is heir to have their origin in an unsatisfactory condition of the nervous system. Therefore the one great necessity to eradicate and eliminate disease, in all its forms and phases, is to provide for the nourishment and sustenance of the nerves by which the period of life will be considerably extended, and old age when reached will be made pleasant, even to be coveted. To realise this desirable project he had diligently applied himself through years of careful and patient research, and had at length succeeded by the invention of a magnetic pad, he forthwith produced, made upon strictly scientific principles in accordance with simple natural laws which had hitherto escaped observation. This pad, or, more strictly speaking, belt would be worn in the region of the solar plexus and ensure that constant and desirable stimulus to which he had referred. But the true value of the discovery lay not so much in the belt, which in itself was valueless, but in the mysterious and secret compound he had worked out from an ancient alchemical formula. This elixir, operating through the stomach, would charge the belt and set in action the restorative currents, which would be manipulated, continued and regulated by the frequency and proportion of the doses prescribed.

Harry studied the fire with stolid face and contracted brow while the scheme was unfolded, and then poured a torrent of cold water upon the old man's enthusiasm. There might be a chance of making a few shillings occasionally by the sale of one or two of the belts but he had little faith in it. Still if anything could be done to improve his father's position he would help to do so, and to this end was willing to look into the matter and give it a trial.

This attitude made the old man glad to get half a sovereign rather than his anticipated five-pound note; but he consoled himself with the thought that while Harry was hard-headed and difficult to deal with, he was also conscientious; it would therefore be all right in the end, since this invention was a genuine and thorough-going concern.

The idea really struck the son as an inspiration, and he lost no time in grasping the whole details of the scheme and rendering himself proficient in the compounding of the mixtures - the pad could be manufactured outside. Then he proposed the father should proceed to Australia and sweep up the superfluous wealth of the newly-discovered goldfields, while he undertook the more difficult task of floating the scheme in England. The proposition was eagerly accepted, Stephen Waggle fell into the trap, and died in a land of strangers a drunken dreamer to the last.

Harry moved to Brixham, where his antecedents were unknown, secured three rooms, one of which would be required for professional purposes, exhibited a modest brass plate with the legend, 'Samuel Foxleigh, Consulting Specialist,' and

was ready for business.

Exit Waggles - enter Foxleigh.

Now to set the new enterprise to work. This required advertisement, and available capital was limited, but Harry, or Samuel rather, had already worked out a scheme on the principle that tact was convertible into a good equivalent for hard cash. All the success he had hitherto achieved had come from 'fishing gudgeon in religious rivers;' it was a plentiful and profitable sport, and with the change of patronymic he saw no reason to change his fortune, since London was wide enough to hide his identity until at least he had made something of a reputation.

He joined the Ebenezer Chapel, where he was a welcome acquisition - there were not many professional men in the congregation at that time; the minister called to see him, and the unsuspecting soul nibbled at the beautiful bait. Foxleigh was a philanthropic gentleman of easy circumstances, to whom God had entrusted this almost miraculous secret for the good of suffering humanity, and he had determined the poor and oppressed should benefit from it as far as possible. He had no actual necessity for more money than he possessed as a heritage, therefore in coming to London he had chosen Brixham rather than the West End, and in order to make his remedy a still greater blessing he had determined to reduce his charges one half to cases recommended from all churches, and a proportional amount of his profits would be annually returned to those churches from which his clients came. As an instance of the genuineness of his specific, he was anxious to gratuitously undertake a deserving and well-attested case to be watched by a committee of ministers of the neighbourhood, and he thought he could offer no better guarantee of his charitable intentions.

The float presently went down with a sudden bob, and the first fish of the new venture was landed.

It was not difficult to find such a case as he required in the Ebenezer Sunday school - a little pale-faced starveling, one of four whom a widowed mother was worrying her life away in attempting to feed and cover the nakedness by promiscuous charring. He needed bread, so the parish doctor affirmed, and because he had been robbed of this fundamental right of even the most debased among humanity, all the fiends of starvation were closing around him to stealthily kidnap him to feed the tomb. Because he had not they would take away even that he had, and the Sunday school gave him words and creeds and promises as a substitute for nourishment. Foxleigh took him out of his surroundings of poverty for the time, took him to his own home after the ministerial committee had seen him. The recording angel took note of the transaction, and if a life of infamy, black as hell can dye it, shall stand against a man at the bar of God, such an action shall not be lost, but show a ray of mitigating light across the gloom that heaven's Righteous Judge shall not fail to take account of.

The new condition, with regular and good meals, cod liver oil and daily bathing, supplementing the belt and elixir, soon began to take effect; the committee of observation began to thank God for the wonder being wrought in their midst, other patients began to consult Mr. Foxleigh, for the churches heard of 'the miracle,' the religious papers sent to make inquiries, and glowing paragraphs appeared containing statements by members of the committee, in all of which the philanthropic motives of the specialist were eulogised, and daily the business increased.

Foxleigh smiled. It was a cheap but effective advertisement, well planned and very successfully carried through.

Still such self-denying philanthropy is open to misconstruction, misrepresentation and even persecution. Jealous medical men called the attention of their council to Foxleigh's presence, and after a period of detective espionage in order to prepare a case, he was cited before the courts as a charlatan and a quack. Expert evidence as to the valueless nature of his elixir and belt were produced, and not content with this it was further shown that his pretended philanthropy was an equal fraud since his compound, sold at the reduced rate of seven shillings per eight-ounce bottle, could be profitably made for threepence per quart; and his belt, so charitably sold for one guinea, only cost eighteenpence. But against the vindictive partisanship, the ministers, church and religious press protested both in and out of court, and in the end Foxleigh escaped with a fine and caution. The prosecution served as a great advertisement, and his business increased wonderfully, though he was careful afterwards only to supply his goods upon the prescription of a medical man to whom he gave a minor interest for his services.

So the business grew, and Foxleigh's advertising account was proportionately divided between the religious papers and donations to the churches, but though the former were absolutely necessary to record his many testimonials, the latter were by far the more profitable, since his appearance as chairman at public meetings and anniversaries, bazaars and dinners added to his popularity and gave a good return for the demand made upon his time. Thus he increased in fortune and importance, until the idea struck him for building Mount Pisgah Church, of which he held the reins and was the great guiding force.

The vacillating Pinchbeck scarcely knew whether he was more pleased or otherwise to find Victor and Pawley awaiting him in the neighbourhood of the deacon's house; he had half hoped for their being unpunctual that he might first speak to Foxleigh. But his wish was not to be granted, the clock of the neighbourhood was already striking the hour when he nervously rang the bell.

A stately man in livery flung the door open, and, with a bow of mechanical deference to the minister, inquired, 'Gentlemen with you, sir?'

'Y-es! I think perhaps - no, we will go in at once.'

Hesitation was not one of the permissibles of the Foxleigh establishment, and the habitual indecision of Pinchbeck always served to accentuate the sharp, clean-cut and decisive movements of Jeames, who at once made three deliberate but well-defined steps and ushered them into the consulting-room.

Upon the table stood the low pillars of Mammon representing yesterday's collection, which had just been counted, and Foxleigh was entering their amount in his book before handing it over to an unobtrusive individual who sat beside him - Mr. Blake, another deacon and treasurer of the church.

The great man condescended to raise his eyes as the door opened, and greeted the minister nonchalantly.

'Ah! Pinchbeck. How do?' Then, catching sight of something more than a shadow following the parson, he started with an unpleasant surprise. But what's - who are these?'

'Pardon the liberty, Mr. Foxleigh, but I think you already know Mr. Victor. May I also introduce Mr. - Mr. - '

'Pawley.'

'Y-es, Mr. Pawley.'

Appearances warranted any inference rather than that of the pardon being granted. Pawley's remark to the pauper woman last night had not been forgotten, but when this was so speedily followed by a presumptuous intrusion upon the deacon without an appointment, audacity could go no further nor expect to be received with politeness. For the moment the autocrat was at a disadvantage, then without the slightest acknowledgment to either of his unexpected visitors he asked, -

'I suppose this intrusion relates to church matters?'

'Y-es, our - '

'That's enough! I want no preaching; we had enough of that yesterday. I attend to business here.' Then to the intruders, 'The church is the place for religion - see me there on Wednesday.'

The experience of yesterday had suggested to Pawley the advisability of studying what Pinchbeck had called the essential features of metropolitan Christianity in order that he might be able to contrast them with the religion of Christ, therefore he was more interested than annoyed by the peculiarly new phase to which he was being introduced, and had no wish to cut the interview unnecessarily short.

'If you will allow me to explain, I think you will agree I did the most advisable thing in asking the gentlemen to see you,' apologised Pinchbeck.

Foxleigh was reasonable enough to understand that some apparently sufficient excuse must exist to warrant the step taken, and had it not been for the unfortunate incident which had prejudiced Pawley to his mind, his attitude might not have been

quite so antagonistic. Though haughty and overbearing, he was also politic, even specious, on occasions, therefore having conveyed a hint to the stranger which might not pass unheeded, he prepared himself to condescendingly grant the request.

‘Well, be brief, and I will consent to give you two minutes.’

With more brevity than discretion the minister replied, ‘They wish to ask your consent for our young people to commence an open-air service.’

‘A what!’ cried the deacon as if a cordite shell had exploded in the room. ‘Are you mad, man?’

‘No. I hope not. The idea scarcely approved itself to my mind. Mr. Victor can tell you so. But there are also other reasons, making the responsibility of a final reply too great for me to undertake.’

‘If you will excuse me, Mr. Foxleigh, I don’t think we need trouble you any further,’ Pawley explained. ‘We have evidently made a mistake, which I would at once admit and then withdraw. Mr. Pinchbeck held out no hopes of our success, but I acceded to Mr. Victor’s wish to see you for the sake of some of the young people in your congregation - ‘

‘What do you know of our young people?’ he inquired ferociously, pacing the room like an excited beast of prey.

‘Nothing at all - ‘

‘Then let them alone and mind your own business.’

‘If anyone is to blame for this interview,’ suggested Victor, ‘it is I, and I alone. I do know our young people, and for two years past they have had a wish to commence such a service on the Common - ‘

‘But they must go elsewhere to do it,’

‘Well, I think that some of them would not hesitate to do that if necessary. But I ask you, please, to hear what I have to say on their behalf. Two years ago such a course was decided on, and it has not been carried out simply because we lacked the man to lead us. Now, my friend, who has long been familiar with such work, has just come to London - being engaged with Mr. Michael Harleston in some new publication - and I have enlisted his sympathies with a view to commencing next Sunday.’

‘Did you know of this idea among our young people?’ he asked querulously of Pinchbeck.

‘Well, I did hear something of it at the time, but I thought it had been given up.’

‘Then why did I not know of it? Am I nothing - beneath consideration - in such a matter?’

‘No! Certainly not! But, you see, I thought it was all done with.’

‘Thought! You have no right to think, sir! You always land me in a hole when you attempt it.’ Then to Victor: ‘You say you want to begin this work next Sunday?’

‘We shall commence next Sunday,’ said Pawley, definitely.

‘But that will allow us no time to talk it over,’ he answered again taking his seat and composing himself.

‘Such a work requires but little consideration for its approval,’ remarked Pawley, and according to Mr. Pinchbeck the whole decision rests in your hands.’

‘Yes, practically,’ he replied, as if balancing the determination in his mind, ‘but, of course, one always prefers to act with the full concurrence of all the officials. Still, if you will, I suppose I must consent to a trial, but in doing so I must distinctly ask you to be careful what you do, as anything extravagant would be very derogatory to the reputation of Mount Pisgah. But if I have any skill in reading character - and I flatter myself I have - I think I can leave the matter in Mr. Pawley’s hands with confidence.’ Then, abruptly turning the subject, he said, ‘So you are joining hands with Mr. Harleston, eh?’

‘That is my purpose in coming to London; but allow me to thank you for acceding to our wish, and, as we have considerably trespassed upon your time, I will say good morning.’

‘I don’t trouble about that now I know who you are, because, if you will, you may save me a journey to town, and so I shall save time, and time being money I shall be something in pocket by the interview after all.’ By this time he was in his most suave and affable mood. I think I saw a hint of this new publication in the *Times* and was about to call upon Mr. Harleston and offer him my advertisement with a view to help him. Would you mind taking it and handing the same to your manager?’

‘That is my position,’ he answered.

‘It is; well, really, how fortunate after all! See!’ producing a printed copy of his proposed announcement, ‘I will give you my small one to begin with - say fifty-two insertions at - I suppose you will have a fairly large circulation?’

‘We should have with Mr. Harleston’s name on the cover.’

‘I should think so. Well - let me see - fifty-two insertions at two and ninepence. I will give you the order.’

‘Pardon me, Mr. Foxleigh, but I cannot accept it - ‘ still as quiet and unperturbed as ever.

‘Not accept it! What do you mean, sir? Don’t you know the value of my advertisement?’

‘I am fully aware of the value certain houses attach to different advertisements, but yours is not the only one of that kind. I have already secured the one of the General and Mercantile Bank, which is quite sufficient for my purpose, and yours

belongs to a class I have determined not to accept at all.'

Foxleigh again turned livid with a quick return of passion; such a calm and definite refusal was a new experience to him, and this too from a man to whom he had granted a pacifying concession.

'Is this your gratitude for the favour I have granted you?' he inquired with a warning hiss in his voice.

'Pardon me, sir,' replied Pawley, with a touch of contempt in his tone for the man who could so traffic with his religion; if you think you have done me any favour let me at once disabuse your mind of such an idea. I told you previously that I should commence those services, with or without your consent, next Sunday. Whether Mount Pisgah Church recognises them or not is to me a matter of pure indifference. But, like yourself, I am something of a judge of men, and when Mr. Victor mentioned my connection I saw the effect it produced and knew at once what your reply would be. Your religion, I see, bends to the exigencies of your business; I try to allow my religion to control mine, therefore the purpose I formed at first respecting your advertisement is not changed in the least. I am sorry to have to refuse it, but it was offered, not canvassed, and I cannot accept it. Good morning.'

'I will make you eat that insult with bitter herbs, my beautiful Bird of Paradise, or my name is not Samuel Foxleigh.'

But Pawley was already out of earshot and the threat was lost upon him.

'I am afraid you made an enemy of him at the last,' said Victor, anxiously, as they gained the street.

'Better that than secure his friendship at the expense of fidelity,'

'But you don't know what he is capable of when he once makes up his mind.'

'Neither need I care. I have done no wrong and though the result of it may in a certain sense be annoying it can never be disastrous in the end. It is the Lord who reigneth, Victor; why should I fear what man can do to me? I tell you candidly I have very little hope of doing anything at your church, but it has clearly come into my hand and I dare not run away from it. God knows more than I do about it, and I am willing to leave the issue with Him, but for myself I could wish it were otherwise.'

'You know your own know best, of course; but I think if you had known him better you would have seen the advisability of meeting him in some way.'

'And bowed to him rather than stood firm for God! No, Victor, I have no wish to rush into such trouble as may come from my decision, but I would rather meet it hand in hand with God than linked to Foxleigh. I am not afraid.'

Chapter XIII – Discipleship

The day after the interview with Foxleigh, as Pawley returned from luncheon, he was called into the sanctum of his chief.

‘My dear Pawley, I have good news to report.’

‘I am glad to hear it, sir.’

‘His lordship is in town to-day and in the most exuberant spirits. He has made most flattering inquiries respecting yourself, and for the prospects of our success is full of congratulations. Egad! no sensible man could be otherwise. But, by the great St. Patrick, an incident occurred while he was here that was worth at least a thousand pounds.’

‘May I know what it was?’

‘May you know? By the mass, my friend, it concerns yourself entirely, and for that reason I have been impatient to see you. While his lordship was pouring forth such encomiums upon your ability and forethought as made me green with envy, we were interrupted by a gentleman whom the gods themselves had sent - a man equally renowned in his profession as I have the honour to be in my own. It was none other than the great philanthropist - The Christian philanthropist, Samuel Foxleigh.’

‘Mr. Foxleigh!’

‘Yes, sir; you may well express surprise. He called in person to pay his compliments to myself and the *Register* - compliments I appreciate most sincerely - and to solicit the favour of being represented in our first issue by the insertion of this advertisement.’

Pawley wondered how much had passed in reference to the interview of yesterday, but decided to keep his own counsel for the present.

‘It is too late, sir; every inch of my eight pages is full.’

‘But I have given him my word - my honourable word - that it shall appear.’

‘But you were not aware that every space is filled.’

‘Then, sir, you must do as we do in our literary pages when overcrowded - make room.’

‘That is impossible, Mr. Harleston; my spaces are let by measurement.’

‘And who are you, sir, to dictate to me? I tell you I have promised it shall appear, and his lordship confirmed it. Not only that, but Mr. Foxleigh has left a cheque in payment for twelve months.’

This irascible petulance with which he had to continually contend, and the domineering interference at every point, was becoming almost unendurable to Pawley, but he controlled himself, and gently but firmly determined to put his foot upon it.

'I am very sorry these misunderstandings should so continuously arise between us,' he said, 'but I must insist upon the advertisement pages being left entirely in my management, according to our arrangement, or I shall be compelled to resign my position. Mr. Foxleigh has already offered this advertisement to me and I refused it, and his coming to you is simply an attempt to override my decision.'

'And why did you refuse it?'

'As I tell you, I had no room for it. But my chief reason was because I had determined to refuse all quack advertisements from the beginning.'

'And are you in a position to throw some seven pounds into the street? Is this how you propose to make a success of the Register? Egad! I must watch you, sir, or we shall be in the workhouse.'

'Pardon me, Mr. Harleston, there is no money being thrown into the street; it is rather the other way about. The space Mr. Foxleigh asks for two shillings and nine-pence per week is being let for six shillings.'

'But we shall throw this money away if we return his cheque, and that must not be.'

'No, sir! If I had another page to-day I could fill it at double the rate he pays.'

'But I have promised him, and I insist upon it that my word is kept.'

'Then I shall be compelled to leave the arrangement with yourself, sir, for I am quite unable to do it,' and without waiting for further argument Pawley retired.

An hour later, after a sharp and lengthy discussion with Gradeley, Harleston recalled him.

'My dear friend,' he began, offering his hand at the same time, 'I am afraid my impetuosity did an injustice to my discretion just now, and therefore I desire to offer you a full and ample apology. Your work has been so admirably performed that in my sober moments I should never dream of disturbing your arrangements - your most excellent arrangements. But I am afraid the visit and the praise his lordship so generously bestowed upon our efforts - our most unworthy efforts - led me to attempt the impossible, and I therefore trust that you will deem this an *amende honorable* and allow us to proceed amicably towards the goal of our desires.'

'What about the advertisement?'

'My dear sir, send it to the devil, or any other destination you desire.'

Both copy and cheque were flung away from him as loathsome objects.

'I am very glad you see the advisability of leaving these matters in my hands, sir. They have to be dealt with from a business desk rather than an editorial chair' - if he caught the satire, he was welcome to it.

'I sincerely hope we understand each other now, and if in the future you will pass

such communications on for me to deal with, we shall avoid these unnecessary frictions and save any unpleasantness.'

Pawley was beginning to understand the man he had to handle, and though it was very difficult for him to maintain a show of dignity when even a mild apology was offered, he made a determined effort to do so in this instance, hoping thereby to gain some slight advantage which would serve him in another encounter that had to be revived in the near future. On the other hand, Harleston having once given way rushed to the opposite extreme, as was usual with him.

'That is nobly generous of you, my dear friend. Now we will forget the incident, but I pray I may never be allowed to forget your generous and magnanimous temper.'

Five minutes later a note was written to Foxleigh, courteously explaining that the advertising pages of the Register were full, and enclosing both the copy and cheque.

'I think the time has arrived for me to secure a porter,' and, taking up a postcard, Pawley wrote: -

'If James Cox has not succeeded in finding employment and will call at the above address to-morrow (Wednesday) morning at ten o'clock, he may find a friend willing to help him.'

'Whatever comes of that,' he said, as he dropped the card into his despatch box, I shall be able to form some idea as to what has happened to the poor fellow. Mason slipped through my fingers; I hope it will fare better with this man.'

His wish was granted.

Punctually at the hour named Cox put in an appearance, and, much to Pawley's surprise, showed no trace of astonishment at the meeting.

'Did you wonder who sent you the card?' he asked.

'No, sir; I said to my missis as it was you as soon as I got it, and I want to thank you for all you've done for me.'

'What do you mean, Cox?'

'Oh, you know, sir, wi'out me sayin' anything more about it. I ain't one of the clever uns, but I can put one and one together if I try. The Saturd'y after I met you, you know, I got a letter wi' five shillings in stamps inside, wi' the General stamp on the envelope; arter that I had one for five Saturd'ys runnin', always wi' five bob in it, from Cottominster, but not a word o' writin'. Since then it's come from the Strand, an' las' night I got your card in the same 'andwritin', for I kep' all the envelopes for the purpose. That's good 'nough for me, sir, an' I want to thank yer for it - it's kep' me out o' trouble, sure; and now if you'll gi' me a chance, God knows I'll do my best.'

It is needless to say his hope was granted, and he entered on his duties forthwith. Gradeley shook his head dubiously when he heard what had been done, but Pawley

felt an inward satisfaction which he accepted as guarantee in place of a written testimonial as to the man's character.

Among his correspondence that morning was a letter which ran: -

'My DEAR MR. PAWLEY, - Since our interview I have been very anxious to have another talk with you - are you engaged on Friday evening? If not will you come and take an informal American supper with me? Don't trouble to reply, but call for me at six o'clock.

Yours very faithfully, STEPHEN ROSE.'

This was a proposal to violate one of the most sacred canons of Pawley's domestic creed, which provided that their evenings should still maintain their pre-marital charm and fascination, and Ernest shook his head at the inadequate attempt to induce him to prolong his absence when business was over. Still, when it was reported to her, Elinor insisted upon his acceptance, and when the evening arrived, in spite of himself he went to Earl's Court.

As a rule Pawley was very difficult for strangers to understand socially; his delicately-strung psychic temperament being so powerfully yet unconsciously - to himself - affected by others as to make him most fascinatingly attractive to one while at the same moment he was reticent and *gauche* to another. To-night, however, he was at his best. With Mrs. Rose and her daughter - a bright and intelligent girl of some twelve years of age - he was at once at his ease; and supper being over, the drawing room door closed upon the servants, and with the thoughtful Irene sitting on a cushion at his feet, he was ready for the long talk his host anticipated.

'I hope I have not kidnapped you on any false pretence of hospitality to-night,' began Mr. Rose almost before he had time to settle himself, but you set me thinking on a most interesting subject the other day and I want you to clear it up if you can. We Americans are not good when "school keeps," and soon quit problems we don't make headway with, so I want you to explain yourself on that question of discipleship and put me on the track for working it out.'

Pawley smiled even while he felt grateful that he had aroused such a characteristic Western spirit.

'In what sense did I suggest anything in the shape of a problem to you?' he asked.

'I want to get at what I understood you to mean. I may be wrong, but what I caught was an impression that you have an idea that discipleship is divided into classes, and that is so utterly contrary to all my opinions that it worries me. Surely if there is to be unity anywhere it ought to be among the followers of Christ.'

'It should be, and I have no doubt the time will come when it will be, but I think we must both reluctantly admit that for the present the prayer of Christ - "that they may all be one" - is unanswered; in fact, the question of discipleship has if anything retrograded somewhat since He left us. Your idea of class distinctions is not an inapt

one, and our astonishment at such interferences as that of the other morning serves to show with what a low standard of experience we have learned to content ourselves.'

'Then I was not mistaken?'

'But, Mr. Pawley,' asked his hostess, you never think such remarkable coincidences as that about the watch can ever become ordinary and ordained experiences, do you?'

'Why not?' he asked with laconic naivete.

'Because such a thing appears to be absolutely impossible,' she replied.

'In that I shall have to differ from you, since I do not understand that anything can be impossible with God, and I regard the absence of these signs of the Spirit as evidences of our spiritual criminality, for which we shall be held responsible by-and-by. Certainly we are to-day without the Divine attestations because in our lives we ask not for them, or rather we have not because we ask amiss.'

'That raises another question I want to ask about, if you will not allow it to draw you from the first. Why do you give the Bible such peculiar emphasis and use it in such strange connections? I noticed it the other day and now again.' Then to his wife: 'Did you notice it?'

'Yes, there was a somewhat unfamiliar tone somehow.'

Pawley smiled.

'Perhaps it arises from the fact that I have read the Bible as I should read any other book, beginning at Genesis and continuing to the Revelation not only once but many times, therefore I know something of what it says and its connections. When I quote it I use it as I would a poet, breathing more the spirit in which it speaks to me than caring for its exact literary form. I go to it for soul-food, not to establish a doctrine or a creed. It is bread rather than stones I am seeking, and "he that seeketh findeth" - all men get just the identical reward they labour for. He who wants a text finds it; the miner digging for a doctrine comes across it, the soul in search for Christ meets Him, and as each returns from his labour you may know what he set out for by what he brings back, "for everyone that asketh receiveth." I believe the bread sent down from heaven is better gathered as we want it, just as the Israelites gathered their manna every morning, but most people take it, as preserved centuries ago by the Fathers, in earthen vessels, from which the freshness and nourishment has been lost. Perhaps this is the difference you notice.'

'I don't know what it is, but it is there and unmistakable.'

'Well, whatever it is, we will leave it for the present; perhaps while talking over the other matter we may be able to get some light on this. Now, when I get in any difficulty I at once hark back to first principles and try to understand it in the light of Christ. His habit of teaching was to use some simple illustration such as would

enable children to comprehend His meaning and remember the lesson. Let us do the same; it is better than all theological argument, and I think we can find a parable for our purpose the relevancy of which I think will be indisputable. Suppose for instance that we have here a natural magnet and at a distance a bar of soft iron. The one possesses capabilities the other not only lacks, but, in its ignorance, refuses to accept as possible. But the magnet in its generous compassion, knowing how the iron may be enriched and the possibilities with which it may be endowed, determines to impart its own strength and qualities. This can only be accomplished by bringing the two into actual contact. Without this you may labour to instruct the iron, you may succeed in breaking down its obstinate ignorance, convince it of the good intentions of the magnet, demonstrate the advantages to be derived, and even make the iron anxious to possess them, but unless they are brought together no change can possibly take place. You understand my point?’

‘Perfectly. Go on.’

‘Now let us suppose we bring these two together by laying the iron upon the magnet. The instant this is accomplished a thrill passes through the iron producing a change and communicating a new force, though if we at once separate them the change will be scarcely, if at all, perceptible and the new effect will presently be lost. We will leave them, however, and allow the iron to drink of the strength and nourishment of the magnet until the fulness of the one overflows the capacity of the other. To touch the iron now produces the same effect as if we touch the magnet, for all practical purposes the two become one so long as the association remains unbroken. Further, we may continue the operation by laying other bars of iron in conjunction with the first, through which the magnet will communicate its mysterious but undiminished force. The magnet may be buried from sight, but its outpouring will continue until its natural power is perfected in the weakness of the other and every bar of iron possesses in itself the strength of the magnet. Do you still follow me?’

‘Yes, clearly.’

‘Now we will imagine that at some point this connection is broken. I don’t ask for a great breach, the insertion of a sheet of paper or some other unsympathetic substance will suffice, but at once the transmission is broken, the power ceases because the iron is only able to receive, not originate, and presently it will relapse into its primal helpless condition.’

‘Your parable is well drawn. Go on and work it out.’

‘First I will get rid of the two mischievous points I have called attention to. These are the obtrusive attitudes of dogmatic theology. We are reasonably and well instructed in the theory and design of salvation. The sinner as the helpless and impotent bar of iron is directed to the energising power of the Divine Magnet, and the natural state of unregenerate man is also satisfactorily demonstrated. But at this

point where Christ invites the awakened soul to “Come unto Me,” the Church has interposed its formula – “It is not necessary for you to do anything, because Christ has done everything for you,” In other words, you need not come to the magnet, but, lying where you are, “only believe and you shall” receive the power.’

‘You are right doctrinally, and yet you are not altogether right in your statement, because though “by faith we are saved” after that there are demands we are expected to fulfil.’

‘I am dealing purely with the fact of salvation just now, Mr. Rose, and I think if we will first look at it from Christ’s standpoint we shall at once see that the theological one is an error. We are saved by faith, but that cannot be exercised until the soul appreciates both Christ and its own condition; feels its own need and Christ’s ability to save. Then comes the question “Will he save me?” to which is the response: “Come unto Me.” The whole process of salvation is most beautifully illustrated in the incident of Peter’s walking across the water to the Christ - his faith was made manifest by his stepping out after the Master had bade him “Come.” Now what does this imply? We must at least make an effort to come and occupy the position of Christ, place ourselves in the relationship He assumes towards God - that of willing, holy obedience; this is what coming to the cross means - and then by the exercise of faith we shall be saved; or, to return to our parable, the bar of iron must be brought into touch with the magnet before the new power can be transmitted. Faith without coming is of no avail, for we are assured that even the “devils believe,” but in spite of that they are not saved.’

‘I think you are somewhat straining the point, because all you say is acknowledged and, so far as I understand, included in believing.’

‘I don’t doubt its being acknowledged and even understood by the few, but it is not insisted on nor practised by the many. It may exist tacitly in the ideal of the scheme, but you know as well as I do that only the units of humanity aspire after ideals; the great mass are satisfied to go with the multitude, hoping to be carried past the point of desire by the surging influence of the crowd apart from individual effort. The condition of our churches to-day is an almost unanimous witness to the truth of this. But let me state my second objection. Even though we have an awakened soul who aspires to the Christ, the Church in its capacity of guide insists that the belief shall not be reposed in the person and power of the Saviour but in something about Him which the councils of men have decreed as an orthodox or right idea. Here we have the interposition of an unsympathetic, non-conducting dogma - another mediator between God and man - which breaks the contact, interferes with the spiritually magnetic and transforming power, and leads us to accept an evanescent emotionalism as the gift of the Holy Ghost. No wonder our spiritual life has gone down to zero and we imagine the spiritual gifts were only intended for the apostles.’

‘I guess you are more severe than the facts warrant, but I am waiting to hear what

follows,' said Mr. Rose, as if impatient to get Pawley from such heretical ground.

'If you think so do me one favour for the moment and I will at once proceed.'

'What is it?'

'Give me credit for my severity arising from what I believe to be loyalty to Christ rather than an unworthy antagonism towards the Church.'

'I will be as lenient with you as I can, but I want you to understand that you are attempting to raze the foundations of my temple before you offer me so much as another place to worship in.'

God "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," Mr. Rose, neither can the infinite be compressed into the capacity of the most liberally-constructed dogma. But we will learn of Christ, and for the time put aside all the formulae of men, and as we seek to do so I will ask you to observe the kinetic as opposed to the static influence of this Divine Dynamic, to which if we yield ourselves we shall reach a fulness of life rather than suffer the paralysis of spiritual inertia. Between Christ and all other men at the outset lies a definite line of demarcation - the boundary line of the Kingdom He comes to establish - a spiritual condition differentiating the magnet from the iron. In His incarnation Christ at no time crossed this line - being in the world He was not of it - but standing still within the new boundary of the Kingdom He worked the works of God and displayed the characteristic signs and wonders with which His people were to be endowed. By these He attracted the attention of the multitude in such a measure that whether from love, curiosity or hatred, men could not let Him alone; all men sought for Him, and He could not be hid. Here we see at once the mighty power He naturally wields even in the presence of antagonism. But what is this multitude that continually attends upon Him? The Gospels tell us "a great multitude followed Him because they saw His miracles," or in other words His popularity at the first had no deeper foundation than curiosity. Presently we hear Him saying, "Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Self-interest had now succeeded curiosity, and He was followed for what could be made out of Him. There is still such a multitude after Him, or rather after His loaves and fishes, many of whom go so far as to call themselves His disciples if necessary, but the dividing line of the Kingdom has never been crossed. Their allegiance is still to Mammon and their expectations from Christ. To this self-seeking crowd He begins to expound His mission, and lays down the rules which are to govern the community He proposes to establish, after which He invites all who will to "Come" - cross the line, pass into His new Kingdom, separate themselves from their present lord, and loyally follow His leadership. In this demand He is neither unique nor unreasonable, for even human law forbids the holding of citizenship rights in two hostile nations. "No man can serve two masters: either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." In this invitation to service, therefore - and that is all that it amounts to at the outset - He is in no sense peculiar in declaring "Ye cannot serve

God and Mammon!" Seventy of these followers step out from the multitude, cross over the line, and enter His service, the sign of which is a cross - not a crucifix, but a burden, as all labour for a stipulated wage must be in a greater or less degree. Many of these will be dissatisfied and go back again, but we have nothing to do with these for the present. Within the seventy we gradually find a few who, coming into closer contact with the Master, learn to serve Him in a less mercenary spirit; His interests become their own, and they seek to render Him a willing and loyal service because they discover that at heart the Master loves them with an unchanging love they were unable to appreciate until they knew Him. Here takes place a second separation. Twelve of the seventy aspire to become learners or disciples of the Master. An important question arises here whether Christ will or can permit this distinction in His servants without laying Himself open to the objection of being a "respector of persons." If He does allow this we have at once an admission of the principle of class distinction in discipleship, and that He did do so is a fact beyond all possible dispute. Let us see how it comes about. The old invitation, "Whosoever will may come," is still the ever-open door of opportunity for all to approach Him. No man is refused, none are denied, but the choice is of the free-will of the individual, upon whom Christ always throws the responsibility - "How often would I," He says, "but ye would not." All servants may become disciples; He calls them to it, but before they can do so He demands that they shall each be suitably and undisputably qualified for the post. His love has been the attraction to this nearer relationship, and since one of the fundamental principles of the new Kingdom is that "the servant shall be as his Lord," it is essential that from the beginning the likeness shall be manifest. Hence the qualifying demand: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one towards another." "Whosoever will may come," but only they who touch the standard can pass by, for "if a man say I love God, and hateth his brother he is a liar." God loved the world and gave His Son to save it while yet we hated Him, and if we are to be of the Kingdom of God we must go and do likewise. We must be brought to the Magnet in order to partake of Its nature or we can never do Its work. Christ thus reverses our ideas by insisting that we "strive to enter in at the strait gate" and "work out our own salvation," He always being willing to perfect His strength in weakness. He also provides against fraudulent assumption of the office because He has provided an investment of power by which all who take the degree shall be known -

"He that believeth on Me the works that I do shall he do also." Where do we find this endowment of spiritual gifts to-day?

'But that commission and investiture was only to the twelve.'

'Who says so? Christ never did! On the contrary, He did say, "What I say unto one I say unto all," and I claim that His promise, "These signs shall follow them that believe," applies equally with the former part of the commission; "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Such also was Peter's interpretation

of His Master when speaking under the influence of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" The Church having lost its commission and endowments, as Christian lost his roll while asleep, may argue, explain and quote decisions of councils until the crack of doom, but it will still remain that Christianity is the gospel as taught in its simplicity by Christ, not as it is interpreted by Paul, of the fathers, or by councils. All these may be useful in some instances, but the authority and final appeal is still vested in Christ alone. It is of no use saying that Paul "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost," because such an argument only strengthens my contention, and I ask if he so spake why not I?" If there is no break between, the magnetic fluid will be transmitted through every bar of iron earth produces, and the cessation of the current demonstrates the breaking of the connection. The magnet is the same and Christ is the same, how then can there be any loss of power unless the connection be broken? If a single feature of the teaching or evidences of Christ be missing or changed to-day by so much does it evidence the fact that we have lost the simple "faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

'But, Mr. Pawley,' suddenly cried the little lady at his knee, turning her wondering eyes upon him, the angels used to come in those days! Do you think they can come now?'

He ran his fingers caressingly through her silken hair, and smiled at the thought that she followed the discussion with such close interest.

'I had no idea that I was also talking to you,' he said; 'but since you ask, let me answer your question. When we speak of God changing not, we do so because as far as we know His laws never change, and the laws He framed cannot be greater than Himself. Now if God's laws never change it follows that if angels ever did come to earth, as the Bible records, they can also come now.'

'Have you ever seen one?'

'Not that I know of.'

'But you couldn't help knowing if you did see one.'

'I am not quite so sure about that,' he answered with kindly consideration not to disturb her faith. In the Bible we frequently read that they were mistaken for men, and it is quite possible that I might do the same and not know it.'

'Were they?' she asked in incredulous astonishment.

'Yes. They were three men who appeared to Abraham as he sat in the door of his tent. Don't you remember how he brought them food and they ate, and water and they washed? Then Jacob wrestled with a man; Joshua met a man as Israel was marching on Jericho, and the leader challenged him before he knew that he spake to

an angel; it was a man who foretold the birth of Samson; a young man was sitting in the sepulchre after the Lord had risen; and two men in white apparel stood by the apostles as they watched the ascension. So you see it is quite possible to speak to angels and not know it, and though I do not know that I have seen any, shall I tell you what I believe about them?’

‘Yes! Do, please!’

She rose from her seat, took his hand and stood at his knee, her earnest eyes looking wistfully into the face of the man whose religion so deeply interested her as well as her parents.

‘I believe - and if you listen to what I have yet to say to your father, you will see that my faith is warranted from Christ - I believe that the “angels of the Lord are around about them that fear Him,” and that if we try to do what we know to be right, and avoid doing that which is not only wrong, but we feel to be doubtful, should any consequences arise more powerful than we are able to overcome of ourselves, when we have done all we can - not before - God will interpose, and if necessary send one of His angels to deliver us just as He delivered Daniel from the den of lions.’

‘But why doesn’t God send the angels before people suffer so much as they do sometimes?’

‘Ah, my dear, older people than you have often asked the same question! But do you remember what I said just now about Christ calling the multitude to Him? When the seventy came, He made them servants because He wished to try them; and so it is with God. He often allows the cross in various forms to rest heavily upon us to try how thoroughly we love and are willing to serve Him, but we may always have this confidence in Him that “He will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear.” If we trust in Him He will deliver us, but we cannot test our faith until we are tried, and I think one reason why we don’t see more of the angels of God than we do is because we grow cowardly in the hour of trial and run away without giving God a chance to deliver us.’

‘That is because we don’t like pain.’

‘But the question is whether there is not more loss in going back than pain in going forward. You remember that when the three Hebrew children were in the fiery furnace they were not injured because “one like unto the Son of Man” walked with them, and I think if we looked to Jesus and followed Him we should find Him to lead us, by a way we know not, to a greater victory. In fact, this is one of the gifts He promises, and brings me back again to the question of discipleship.’ Then, directing his argument more to the father, he continued: ‘So far we have established no closer relationship in this new kingdom than that of tutor and pupil; the iron has just received its first real influx from the Magnet, but we will follow the Master as He leads us further along this way of life towards the many mansions which He assures us lie on before, and only by treading in His steps are to be reached. As we proceed,

our hearts burning within us with the teaching we receive and the revelations He unfolds - every step carrying us further and further away from the regions of darkness from which we first beheld His most marvellous light, and bringing us more and more into harmony with the new laws and conditions which surround us in the breaking light of God - He pauses, and referring to the love which has already raised us into the preferential position of disciples, He says, "This is My commandment: That ye love one another *as I have loved you.*" He is about to impose another qualification - it is still love, but whereas it has hitherto been of an abstract or indefinite nature, it must now assume a concrete, even an heroic, form - "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My *friends if ye do* whatsoever I command you." "In honour preferring one another" is the unforgeable certificate written upon our loves by the Holy Spirit of God, by virtue of which we are admitted into friendship with Christ. It is only within the narrow circle of the twelve that He makes this proclamation. The graduated ascent up which He leads the soul allows of no variation from the universal law. From the multitude of followers the servants are called, from the servants come the disciples, and from these again the friends - a multitude, seventy, twelve, and now three; the numbers diminish as the qualification becomes more arduous. He is leading all who will come with Him forward towards the baptism He Himself was baptised with, and in doing so His "fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor." The invitation and the way is open to a holy calling, but if the entrance to the temple made with hands was safeguarded by such ceremonial purity, are we to wonder that Christ should be at least equally careful that those who pass with Him into the Holy of Holies of His spiritual temple should be equally cleansed from all impurities, which condition must be attained before it is possible for us to love each other as He has loved us? Again the whole weight of the responsibility is thrown upon our own shoulders. God wills, but we will not.'

'But who can love as He loves us?'

'All who follow Him so far as where He makes the demand. To suggest that this is not possible is to charge Him with the injustice of making a demand we are not able to comply with, and the whole fabric of righteousness at once collapses. Paul did not find this too much for him, because when he reached the point he found "he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him." Association with the Magnet strengthened him with the power thereof, and this is just the normal condition of any soul from whom this exaction is made. The friends of Christ are no longer "strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God." All the powers and liberties of citizenship in the spiritual Kingdom have been conferred, and Christ says, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known to you." "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom," and who but those who enter into such revelation can know its hidden powers. These three who can be with Him when He prays, "Not My

will but Thine be done,” have also the privilege of being with Him when heaven opens and Moses and Elias come to commune with Him. Friends of Christ! and as such they are with Him and behold His glory! At this stage of His leadership, in His incarnate form, He has to leave in order to demonstrate the fact that the heritage into which His friends have entered is one of immortality, invulnerable to the powers of death and sin. He is about to lay down His life in order to show that He has power to take it again, and be “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” In other words, He is about to demonstrate the truth He has been teaching that obedience to the will and law of God as expounded by Himself destroys the power of death, and leads the soul into a fullness of life by its atonement with the Father. But previous to this He has an ultimate degree to point us forward to, a consummation to be reached sometime in the future, therefore he prays, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are one . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me.” Here is the pinnacle of redemption! “Heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ!” Wherein is the qualification for this to be found but in the abiding unbroken communion. It lies in the iron, held by the magnetic force of a continually self-sacrificing cross through which the water of life is flowing to revive a thirsty world, Christ filled with the Father and overflowing, and we filled with Christ and running over so that the world may drink and live, not from us but from the Christ in us, by which alone the work of redemption can be completed. This is my idea of discipleship as I gather it from the teachings of the Master, and until the Church returns to this as an institution she will remain both incapable and unfaithful.’

‘Your standard is a high one. Who can attain it?’

‘They and they only who abide in Christ. The parable of the iron and the magnet is not difficult to comprehend; translate it into the spiritual and we may understand. Filled with Christ we shall be like Christ, and He, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” shall in us and through us continue the works of God and draw “all men to Himself.” He is still able; the error, the hindrance lies in ourselves, and with the hindrance also rests the responsibility. It is an awful truth, calling for deep, soul-searching inquiry, and the sooner we recognise and set about it the better.’

Chapter XIV - On The Common

One of the most honest and heartfelt confessions a systematised religion allows us to make finds expression in the words, ‘We have left undone those things we ought to have done, and we have done those things we ought not to have done.’ It is

framed with such a liberal indefiniteness as to be capable of universal application, and may be used equally by the Free as by the Established Churches; it expresses so feelingly the penitential sorrow alike of the man who is conscious of his shortcomings Godward and he who ill-advisedly selected a losing horse; the man who in his desire to help his fellow has brought himself into difficulties, and the crafty stock-rigger who in his greed has over-reached himself. It has an invariable application to all ranks and conditions of men, and occasionally in an emphatic sense to women also.

Some of the ladies of Mount Pisgah Church were specially conscious of this fact at this period of our story.

When Victor and Pawley sought their interview with Pinchbeck in his parlour on the previous Sunday evening, the ladies, who were in usual attendance on the 'dear man' after his labours, were not a little annoyed at the intrusion, and paid not the slightest attention to the conversation. But later in the week, when vague rumours began to circulate that some stranger had made a most un-Christian attack upon Mr. Foxleigh, the ladies at once identified the said stranger with the intruder in the parlour. The report was at the outset of such a flimsy intangibility as to defy expression. It was a kind of lady's spray - long and flowing - gathered and arranged by Mrs. Pinchbeck from the appearance and demeanour of her husband and backed by certain ejaculatory fragments which none but a woman had the cunning to piece together.

Still Mount Pisgah was a united church; no one member could be touched by a breath of suspicion without others feeling it, but when the minister was disturbed all felt. Mrs. Pinchbeck's surmise ran like an electric shock through the host, and afternoon calls were the religious duty of the week.

But Foxleigh had forbidden the matter to be mentioned, and after the overflow of Pinchbeck's feelings had ceased, not even death could be more silent. Mrs. Victor had calls that week from ladies she scarcely knew, but she was unable to say anything about her husband's friend. Two very pleasant ladies actually went to the trouble of discovering Mrs. Pawley to assure her how pleased they were to observe her presence on Sunday; hoped she was comfortable, would be very pleased to see her at the Dorcas Society, and also to have the pleasure of introducing her to their particular friends. Never did twin souls make more strenuous yet delicate attempts to win the approbation 'I was a stranger and ye took me in,' but Elinor was not an effusive woman, so she was not taken in and the twain departed sorrowfully.

The last chance had gone. Nothing now could be done but wait and watch, and the ladies had to make the united confession of omission for their palpable indiscretion of last Sunday.

As the week wore away the mystery deepened owing to Victor's approaching several of the young people with the news that Mr. Foxleigh had given his consent to

the holding of their long-hoped-for open-air service on the Common, and securing all possible help for the following Sunday. The idea of such a service in connection with Mount Pisgah was too preposterous to need a second thought, but in opposition to such assurance stood the fact of Victor's canvass for assistance, which was undeniable, and also provoking no little enthusiasm among certain of the younger people. The minister and deacons were appealed to, but they, one and all, simply refused to say anything, and the mystery had to work its way towards its own solution.

There was a feeling of now-we-must-know expectancy - Mount Pisgah was too cultured for excitement - over the congregation on the following Sunday morning, and not a little quiet speculation had been hazarded as to by whom, and how, the first intimation would be made. When Pawley entered in company with Victor he attracted more than a furtive share of attention, but he had no reward to give - the only inference to be drawn from his appearance was that of the lying tongue of rumour, and expectant eyes fell in meditative disappointment. Then Foxleigh passed up the aisle and took his seat with his usual blank indifference to everything except himself, and having formally inclined his head for an instant, looked towards the pulpit as if to give permission for the service to commence. At this point expectation was carried forward to the long prayer but that contained nothing but a very guarded allusion to the afflictions of the righteous, which were reminders of God's loving favour towards His children, and a delicately-linked reference to a certain leonine enemy who was occasionally to be heard roaring in the neighbourhood of the fold. The long list of notices were equally silent, neither announcing nor forbidding the service the whole congregation knew was about to be held, and when the benediction confirmed the rising suspicion that the subject was to be ignored, something in the shape of silent consternation seized the congregation, and a most serious construction began to be placed upon the situation.

Small groups of friends were at once formed in the church and forecourt, in each of which the one question was asked whether the stranger who had caused the difficulty ought not to be asked for some explanation. But before any determination could be arrived at, Pawley had been introduced to ten or twelve young men who were anxious to meet him, and having appointed a time and place for meeting, quietly withdrew.

The air of doubt and uncertainty hanging over the whole transaction proved to be an excellent advertisement for the meeting. It had spread beyond the one church; even the world had heard of it, and when Pawley and Victor reached the rendezvous a large company was already awaiting them.

There was no need to delay, and at once stepping into the promiscuously-formed ring Pawley gave out the opening hymn without any attempt at introduction or explanation: -

'God of Bethel, by whose hand Thy people still are fed,

Who through this weary pilgrimage hast all our fathers led.’

It was pitched to a thoroughly familiar tune, and before the first verse was over the singing was taken up with spirit and served to secure a certain unanimity of feeling among the congregation, which speaks of promise if the conductor can only maintain and improve it.

Each verse was given out separately, and by the time the fourth was reached the rising tone of the assembly so uplifted Pawley that his voice trembled in its fervour as he read, or rather prayed: -

‘O spread Thy covering wings around till all our wanderings cease,

And at our Father’s loved abode our souls arrive in peace.’

Then, reverently uncovering his head, he poured forth his soul in a brief, simple and child-like supplication full of faith and confidence, asking for that benediction which had been promised where two or three were gathered in the name of Jesus. He made no attempt to tell God all about himself and those around him, he rather assumed all that to be known, but he pleaded for the promised presence with the full assurance that in that every need would be supplied, and once or twice he paused as if expecting the answer to come. In the simplicity and intensity he carried the people with him, and when he, finished an almost unanimous ‘Amen’ fervently supported his petition.

At the close of another hymn he handed his hat to one near him and proceeded to speak in a free-and-easy manner as a man to men. He had no wish to preach or assume any air of superiority. Under the unprescribed dome of God’s heaven men had an opportunity to meet on something like equal terms of liberal thought, and the product of such occasions, scattered in the fertile soil of sympathetic minds, might germinate and produce a harvest of food for the men who were coming presently. Such was the idea which had prompted the inauguration of those meetings, in which it was proposed to offer freedom of speech and an opportunity to discuss those subjects which from circumstances became important questions of the day. For himself, and he could speak for no other, he had no peculiar axe to grind, no eccentric phase of truth to expound, no sect to uphold, no church to advertise.

From the first it was evident that he was something more than an ordinary open-air sectarian preacher. He spoke with the thoughtful freedom of a man whose mind was stored with treasures he knew how to display to advantage, his emphasis was weighted with an experience not usually found in one so young, and the evident elasticity of his opinion commended itself at once to those who heard him. He had taken no text, therefore no idea could so far be founded as to his intentions, but it was a foregone conclusion that whatever he advanced would be at least intelligent and interesting. Heart, head and soul were linked in close accord, and the magnetic influence of his overflowing personality played with the master hand of genius upon the minds of the large congregation that already drew closer to him.

It was doubtful, he continued, whether in all the wide realm of nature an image of unrest could be discovered comparable with the human mind, possessing, as it appears to do, a voracity for knowledge and achievement for which there is no adequate provision to gratify. It is a startling fact that of all the myriads of pilgrims who have crossed this stage of existence in their journey out of the Whence into the Whither, no solitary one, however gifted, fortunate or successful he may have been has been able to reach the highest ideal. Alexander aimed at conquering the world, then sighed because there was not yet another; Newton, still the first among all philosophers, having reached his pinnacle of fame, looked yet away into the region of the yet unexplored, and at the last only found himself like a child upon the seashore picking up the shells and pebbles which the tide brought in. How easy would it be for him to multiply such citations, but he would rather come to the mighty army of humanity, the men among whom he and his hearers moved and to whom they were equally known. Their presence on that Common was only another testimony to the soul's unrest and unsatisfied craving for something it did not possess. They might not be actually conscious of the fact, but as the sickly plant turns wearily from the darkness towards the sun, so the soul yearns and frets to reach the freedom of the truth. In the effort to find this *summum bonum* of existence, one man turns his eyes backwards and fancies he beholds it in the mythological daybreak of history where the legends of a paradise of innocence and joy are treasured, and he sighs for the days that are gone. Another looks ahead and imagines he sees the aureole of happiness garlanding the brow of the future, and his optimistic spirit applauds the poet as he sings: -

'Tis coming now, that glorious time
Foretold by seers and sung in story,
For which, when thinking was a crime
Souls leaped to heaven from scaffolds gory!
They passed. But lo! the work they wrought!
Now the crowned hopes of centuries blossom;
The lightning of their living thought
Is flashing through us, brain and bosom.
'Tis coming! Yes! 'tis coming!

Others were centring all their hopes in the political promises of the North, while still another class rest in the socialistic possibilities that are rising towards the South, and each and every prophet proclaims his own reform to be the great specific for all the woes of life.

Did the evidence of history warrant them in assuming that if not one but every ideal would be attained, every reform secured, every political aspiration realised, the human mind would even then be satisfied? Then, inviting his hearers to follow him as he glanced backwards in order to reach an answer to his inquiry, he proceeded to discover, lay bare, examine and analyse every symptom, effect and development of structural consciousness and memory in which the human entity is enshrined. So skilfully and masterly did he marshal his facts and conduct his investigation, so delicately, cogently and lucidly did he handle his subject, so consistently did he connect the effect arising from a given cause, so clearly did he set forth his arguments and conclusions, and so intelligently did he grasp the intricacies of his theme, that he presently swayed his audience with the power and authority of a man of far more pretentious ability than he who had modestly appealed to be heard at the beginning. But the majority of his hearers were too fascinated to enter upon such comparisons just then. He had lifted them out of themselves and led them where he would while he burned his arguments into their memories as a preliminary to enforcing the one central and concluding thought towards which he had been leading them.

He paused as if for a moment's rest on the conclusion of his inquiry. He had dissected his intellectual self and discovered to the eyes of his congregation a vision of the soul's unrest such as none cared to controvert or disagree with. Nerve and fibre, muscle and tissue, feature and organ were duly set forth with all the multitude of capillaries of aspiration that die away into the mysterious connections of mind and matter where inquiry loses itself in doubt. Then, having recovered himself while his audience studied the vision he had created, he prepared to apply the argument.

'The records of the past,' he began, 'introduced us to a gallery of ideals which other dreamers have imagined to be the panacea of this soul's unrest; many of these we have reached and passed them by. Have they fulfilled their promises? Alas, no! As we touched them they proved to be "bubbles light as air," the nectar fruit of Elysium turned to ashes on our lips, and with all the realisations of the past, with all the progress we have made, with all the achievements we have gained the mind of man was never so unsatisfied as it is to-day. Why is this? Can it be that in the higher stages of evolution another law comes into operation, not only abrogating that of sequence but actually in opposition thereto - a law producing a demand for which no provision exists? Perish the thought! Rather must we come back to Newton's conclusion and admit that, stupendous as the attainments of the mind have already been, as yet we have only been able to touch but the fringe of the attainable, and the restless yearnings prompting us to new activities are the prophetic utterances of mystic potentialities which, seer-like, from the glory-crowned peaks of the Divine within us ken the shekinah of the Holy Grail which overflows with the fulfilment of every pure and noble desire. Nature is but the introduction to Nature's God, the kindergarten school in which we pictorially learn the rudiments of the education in which we shall be presently instructed, the alphabet we must learn to combine

before we can read and understand the volume of existence. These problems which vex and baffle us are not new to us and our own century; they are as old as civilisation, co-existent with the race, and have been ever equally perplexing to the sage as the savage. The nature and source of life has been the standing problem of all philosophies, and students of other nations besides Chaldea have personified it and cried out, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!" And that cry has found an echoing response in every human soul. It is not the product of intellect, of reason or religious training, it is not peculiar to climate or time, but ante-dating all changes and developments, it is a natural instinct - a heritage of unascertained knowledge invested in the human form from the beginning, the spiritual gravitation through which the yet Unknowable may act upon us and lead us to the Infinite of Divinity Itself.'

He was quite prepared for, and wished to anticipate, the question which must have arisen in the minds of many. How could any reasonably intelligent and scientifically-disposed man be expected to accept such a speculative and fanciful proposition as a working hypothesis leading to a demonstration? In answer to this he reminded them of the strange fragments of vegetation which Columbus picked up on the shores of Europe, from which he inferred the existence of land westward, and drew an analogy between this and the psychic evidences lying at the feet of the metaphysical explorer. But how shall we cross the apparently boundless and trackless sea which rolls between the physical and spiritual worlds, even supposing the latter to exist? Here again he found his reply in the laws of navigation - the pole-star and a sympathetic compass. The counterpart of the latter he readily found in the aspiring gravitation of the mind after truth, and the necessary attracting pole-star in Him who said, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.' As he proceeded to set forth the reasons for this choice, a strange transformation again appeared to come over the speaker, his tongue was loosened, his eye brightened, his personality seemed to expand; his voice trembled with an eloquence he had not hitherto reached, and he swayed his willing audience as reeds in the embrace of a wooing summer's breeze.

Every dream of the reformer: the overflowing hope of Socialism, the righteous ideal of every politician, the solution of the labour problem, the drink traffic, the social difficulty, the submerged tenth, international competition and the arbitrament of nations could all be settled, and justice secured at the bar of this Man 'Who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust,' and whose design it is to establish 'Peace on earth goodwill to man.'

He would be told that Christianity had already been tried and had miserably failed to carry out its promises. But he would remind them that Christianity was the pure teaching and gospel of the Christ, not a system of theology, formulated, revised and perfected by successive councils of the so-called fathers and schoolmen. If the teachings enunciated to-day were not able to uplift and save, in that fact lay the

damning proof that the Church had forsaken its Founder, and had gone back again to the world.

Then, in a magnificent peroration, he set forth the one great need of the day as being a companionship *with* rather than a belief *in* Jesus, and contrasting the vast difference between the two he appeared to catch and reflect the spirit of the two disciples whose hearts burned within them as they walked with the Unknown on the way to Emmaus, and the sacred glow kindled and spread until the people looked from one to the other, thrilled with the burning words of the stranger who exalted One he evidently loved so well.

The volume of response that rose in answer to his request for all to join in the closing hymn bore evidence to the certainty that the speaker had captured his congregation, and that open-air service on Brixham Common might henceforth be considered an institution.

‘All hail the power of Jesus’ name, Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem And crown Him Lord of all.’

The influence of the discourse was not entirely confined to the direct line of the argument, interesting as it was in subject and attractive in its presentment, but to many thoughtful and inquiring persons it threw sidelights upon other questions that were then, and are still, fruitful topics of discussion. One of these was a fairly satisfactory settlement of the reason why intelligent men more and more absent themselves from church. The advocates of the theory that the day of the sermon is past, or that, if permitted, it must be curtailed so as not to exceed ten minutes in its delivery, were there confronted with an argument it would be difficult to refute. A perfect stranger with no other attraction than his sermon had held a crowd, reaching at its close towards a thousand persons, in rapt attention for a full hour, under circumstances not at all conducive to bodily comfort, and when he finished not a few regretted that he had not continued. Why was it? Simply that the speaker had taken up a sensible, logical position, and, without attempting to dogmatise, he had been suggestive without laying any claim to authority, he had made himself helpful; without assumption, he had stood among inquirers, himself inquiring, while yet he reached out in an anxious effort to grasp and examine the promises that beckoned him forward. He kindled thought, seductively wooed the mind into activity, established more associations of ideas, opened new approaches to old questions, gave to religion an atmosphere of intelligent inquiry, by dealing with it in the spirit of controversial investigation, acknowledging in all humility that he had not yet attained, but was, as anxiously as any of his hearers, still reaching out after the fulness of truth which has yet to be revealed. The development of the human mind is leading us further away from the old paths in which our ancestors were content to be driven in fear of the theological whip, but the music of the old gospel still possesses its fascinating charm to attract us when it is sung by lips trained to accentuate its

melody at the feet of Jesus.

While the hymn was being sung, stray units began to drop away from the crowd, and among the first of these were two men who wished to escape notice. A restlessness of soul in a more unworthy form had first of all - unconscious of each other - prompted them to watch from a distance what they hoped to find would be a failure to hold a meeting. The disappointment of success raised in one the fury consequent upon defeat and in the other the hatred of a possible rivalry, and in their fear discretion deserted them, so that for the greater part of the address they had listened in anything but a sympathetic mood.

As if moved by one impulse, Foxleigh and Pinchbeck dropped away from opposite sides of the crowd, and each, in their chagrin studying their toes, unconsciously gravitated towards each other. They were scarcely a yard apart when the deacon raised his eyes and gave expression to a somewhat secular exclamation as he recognised the parson.

'Well?' he snapped audibly, in much the same tone as a highwayman would command a man to stand and deliver.

Such a meeting was the very thing Pinchbeck did not want just then, and his nervous excitement plainly said so. But he was also wary, and while he gave his hypocritical smile of recognition time to spread over his face, he crept into his usual uncompromising retreat, from which he only spoke as an echo, until he found some advantageous point of attack.

'Well?' he drawled.

'Are you satisfied now you see what you have done?'

'What you have done,' Pinchbeck repeated, with a slight emphasis upon the pronoun.

'Me - me!' cried Foxleigh in undignified excitement, energetically striking his chest with both index fingers. Did I ask the fellow to come and see me?'

'And I refused his proposal, but you agreed to it because of the advertisement.'

Foxleigh was speechless for the moment with rage. Pinchbeck had gone too far, and he knew it when it was too late. The deacon saw his chance, and at once controlled himself to seize the advantage.

'Oh! that is how it happened,' he said with quiet, malicious significance. 'I see you are at your old game again, and going to make me your scapegoat. Good! I have had enough of this, and will end it now.'

It was an old threat and meant nothing, but it always served to induce a cold sweat in the parson.

'Perhaps I ought not to have troubled you in the matter,' he answered apologetically, willing now to do anything to conciliate his powerful opponent, but

you can see developments so much better than I can. What do you propose that we should do?’

‘What shall we do?’ he sneered. ‘What can we do? Anyway we can only make things worse; and a pretty how-do-you-do it will be for Mount Pisgah to be made responsible for what he has said this afternoon.’

‘But he never mentioned the church, Mr. Foxleigh.’

‘Bah! What need for that when all our people were with him, and you were in his congregation.’

‘And you.’

Of course I was there. What else could I do but go and see how many of our people would dare to attend, when I would allow no notice of it from the pulpit. That stamped my disapproval upon the whole thing, and yet I find you there, and I tell you I shan’t forget it.’

‘But how could I know what he really said unless I heard him for myself? Now I know just what to do, and am ready to help you to stop him at once.’

‘Stop him!’ cried Foxleigh; ‘don’t talk like a fool, man. How are you going to do it after this afternoon? He’s a preacher and the people will have him. You might as well talk of stopping the sun shining, but how are you going to do it?’

Pinchbeck was not ready with his plan. The project was ‘a consummation devoutly to be wished,’ but how to reach it was a problem to be solved, and while the idea was considered the meetings went on week by week increasing in numbers, interest and influence.

Chapter XV – Publishing Day

When Pawley had revised, signed and sent the advertisement sheet of his first number to press, Levison took hold of him and drew him into his private office for a chat about the prospects. He had attempted to do so before with the natural interest a man feels in an undertaking upon which he is in any way engaged, but Pawley had hitherto evaded him under the plea of pressure of business. Now such an excuse no longer availed, since the starting of the machine always affords a breathing space after the rush and worry, if only for half-an-hour, and the printer felt himself entitled to such information as might be obtained. Again, all unknown and unsuspected by Pawley, he had formed a theory of his own to account for the unbusinesslike way in which the new serial was being introduced, and was curious to compare notes, first of all for his own guidance, but also with a desire to offer a word or two of advice in an attempt to save the young fellow whose general conduct had so far most favourably impressed him. In their business relations Pawley had also grown confident in the open and straightforward treatment he had received at the

hands of the printer, and when he was asked bluntly to tell him honestly how he got on with the old man, he opened his mind somewhat in the hope that Levison might be of some service to him in his difficulty.

‘That is just what I anticipated,’ said he when Pawley had finished his story. ‘I was sure of it from the very first, and was in two minds to put you on your guard against the blundering egotism of the old fool when I first saw you, but it’s rather a ticklish matter to interfere with the business arrangements of other people. Harleston is without doubt the most consummate ignoramus, the greatest blatherskite I ever met with in the whole course of my career. How the fellow managed to get a footing among respectable business men I am at a loss to understand; he must have been pitch-forked into it when the wise-acres were napping, and they allowed him to remain rather than expose their own indiscretion. Then he got a name by some lucky fluke or another, but how he did it the devil only knows, for I’ll swear he never made it; he has not the ability. The fellow is just a literary freak for which there is no possible explanation, and one of these days somebody will prick his bubble and he will disappear as suddenly as he came up. His popularity suits us on the Mirror, and we are pleased to keep him as a commercial success, but we are always at open feud in business matters, and if we allowed him to do as he wished we should be bankrupt in a year. He would knock the bottom out of the purse of Fortunatus in three months if he could only get his hand in, and why the earl doesn’t see it I am at a loss to understand.’

‘Of his ability as an editor I know nothing and therefore am not in any position to speak,’ replied Pawley, guardedly, but I am painfully aware of the fact that as a business man, in this case at least, he has taken a most impracticable step. But what am I to do? He will allow no one to interfere. Unfortunately I placed myself in his hands before I made the discovery, and am now entirely at his mercy.’

‘Yes, and when your back is turned he is chuckling over it. Well, there you are; you are in for the purchase of a piece of experience the price of which will astonish you before you have paid it, I can tell you. It’s not my business, of course - we have taken the precaution to make ourselves right with Shenstone - but his lordship will get a shaking this time unless he wakes up shortly. Harleston has been waiting for years to give us this lesson in business management. He has threatened it till we are tired of waiting for it, and now his chance has come; but I pity you and Shenstone.’

So did Pawley, but pity and argument were alike impotent in the presence of the four-footed obstinacy of the hilarious editor.

The ceremony of Harleston’s leaving the office for the day was always more or less of an artistic affair, from the number of times he had to return for something forgotten. That afternoon it was more than usually so. He had already kept his cab waiting twenty minutes, a fact foreboding an argumentative battle over the fare for which the driver was well prepared and always came off best, when he started with a determined vow not to return again. But he had scarcely reached the door when he

paused, brought his cane down with a venomous thump on the floor, rushed back to his desk and rang the gong.

‘My dear Pawley, I think the devil is in the office this afternoon, or I am coming near to the period of my dotage.’

‘I hope not, sir.’

‘Now don’t attempt to argue, but listen to what I have to say. I need your advice and generous counsel for a moment.’

‘In what way?’

Throwing his sombrero across to its regular table the old man took his seat, forgetting all about the cab.

‘The day of our great triumph is now rapidly approaching,’ he began.

‘I sincerely hope so,’ but there was more doubt than confidence in Pawley’s tone.

‘Hope so, sir! Do I not tell you that it is so? Who are you to dare to cast a shadow across my sunshine - what is your experience or standing to warrant you in contradicting what I please to assert? Again I say - and I repeat it most emphatically, sir; and dare you deny it - that the day of our triumph - our hitherto unparalleled and unique triumph - approaches.’ Here he came to a significant and lengthy pause to ascertain whether he had completely annihilated the audacious doubt, and, being satisfied that he had done so, proceeded. ‘And I must request that you prepare to hail its dawn with appropriate jubilation - not with the “ifs” and “buts” of a despicable ingrate, sir. But I called you to my presence for business, not argument.’

‘I am waiting to hear your wishes.’

‘I had nearly forgotten that I shall require you to accommodate ten ladies to-morrow.’

‘Ten ladies!’

‘Ladies, sir! Yes, I said ladies. Did you think I said earthquakes?’

‘But it’s impossible to arrange for their comfort at such short notice.’

‘Comfort - notice, sir! What has that to do with me? What do they want with comfort when they come for work? Give them wrappers, pens and ink, then let them look after themselves.’

‘Are they the ladies to address the wrappers?’ he inquired.

‘What else did you imagine they were coming for, sir? Do you think they are going to play leap-frog over my desk?’

‘But we have no room for so many here. Don’t you think - ’

‘No, sir! I never think,’ he yelled, ‘and I also decline to argue. They will be here at ten o’clock, and you must be ready for them.’ And he rose to take his departure.

‘Really, Mr. Harleston, I don’t see how I can do so. Had you told me earlier I could have made some provision.’

‘It was not your business before, sir; now you know it and have plenty of time to arrange everything. There is an office upstairs you can turn them into, and let them scratch or caress each other as they feel inclined. But don’t let me see them, sir - don’t let me see them. I have fought a veritable Waterloo with each of them already in persuading them to work for the money they would pilfer from my pocket, and I have no wish to meet one of the cats again. The indignity of work, indeed! By the great guns of Nelson, I hate pride as I hate the devil!’

‘Then let me put any further annoyance out of the question by sending the wrappers to their homes; they can be addressed there equally well as here.’

‘My dear Pawley, allow me to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the generous consideration you always show for my personal comfort, it is a matter of which I am deeply sensitive and hope some day to be in a position to return it in the same most excellent spirit. But as you grow older you will come to understand how impossible it is for me in this instance to accept your otherwise most worthy suggestion. Circumstances demand that a certain judicious amount of display should precede success, or, as your religious disposition will enable you to appreciate, the Apostle reminds us that it sometimes behoves us to suffer in order to obtain our desires; and whatever may have been my sins and shortcomings in the past - and I confess they have not been few - no one shall be able to say that in this instance I have been disobedient to such visions as have been granted me.’

‘But I fail to see how the presence or absence of these ladies can affect us either way.’

‘Then permit me to enlighten your ignorance, sir - an ignorance which would be a disgrace to a South Sea Islander, and here I have to combat it in the centre of civilisation. The presence of those ladies in this establishment is part of my carefully-arranged scheme to advertise the pending publication of the Workman’s Register. Humanity has been largely gifted with a sense of curiosity, and the second time those ladies enter these doors, the errand lad across the way, or some other equally inquisitive individual, will at once make common cause with the maid in our basement to know why they are here. I shall see that maid in the morning and ensure her giving the necessary information in her own glowing colours, and half an hour later London will be in flames with the intelligence.’

As he unfolded his explanation the old gentleman preened himself like an incomparable peacock at the novelty of the surpassing genius from which the conception sprang.

Pawley smiled ruefully.

‘Very well, sir,’ was all the reply he trusted himself to make, but his thoughts were scarcely flattering.

The ladies arrived in due course, each fully persuaded in her own mind that she was about to enter upon a period of alliance with the most distinctly popular editor of the time, sit *vis-a-vis* with him in his sanctum, and catch somewhat of the reflected lustre of his glory but with their introduction to the upper room their dreams sustained an eclipse from which a perfect storm of fussiness and indignant complaint broke forth. Harleston vigorously washed his hands in the waters of enjoyment and roared hilariously as he heard the report, but steadfastly refused to be interviewed by the appointed deputation since all his business arrangements were in Mr. Pawley's hands. For a time it seemed as though a strike would ensue, seriously disturbing the 'carefully-arranged plans' of the editor. However, with a little tact and management, the difficulty was overcome and the addressing of the wrappers commenced. But the scheme appeared destined to failure in spite of Harleston's determination or Pawley's resourcefulness. The ladies came and went and the day of publication drew nearer and nearer, but either from perversity, blindness or sheer obstinacy the hypothetical errand lad appeared not to notice their presence. Day after day anxious inquiries were surreptitiously made from that maid-of-all-work as to whether she had yet been interviewed, but though she avowed her increasing readiness to impart the well-rehearsed information she always shook her head, and at length the eve of the great day arrived and the Strand district was unconsumed. That errand lad was undoubtedly one of true and characteristic stupidity - a perfect specimen of the genus. The printer's van arrived with two consignments of the new publication, the press copies were prepared, and Harleston watched their ostentatious display when despatched to post; the first batch of the twenty thousand were sent away; it was in the middle of the month, the size and appearance of the packages was as different in colour and character to the Mirror as it was possible to secure, and yet the curiosity of that lad was untouched. Harleston sighed and turned from his window with the first true shadow of doubt sailing across his mind.

Then his lordship called to make inquiries as to the prospects, and the editor recovered himself immediately. The necessary commotion of despatch gave a brisk business air to the place, and in the proprietor's presence the mercurial effects thereof were most sensibly registered upon the delighted editor, who rushed into Pawley's room with the inquiry,-

'Mr. Pawley, his lordship has done us the great honour to call and ascertain our prospects for to-morrow. Tell me for his satisfaction how many orders you have actually received up to the present time.'

Ernest took up his almost empty file and for the twentieth time dejectedly counted up its total.

'Only seventeen quires in addition to the bookstall orders.'

'Only seventeen quires!' he exclaimed. My dear sir, I regard that as something phenomenal, far greater even than my own anticipations. If we have so many before publishing day what may we not expect tomorrow? It is wonderful, amazing!' and

away he went to tell his lordship.

When at last the day did dawn the newsagents' collectors appeared to have imbibed the spirit of the errand lad, and Pawley was leisurely opening his correspondence when Harleston rushed into the office.

'Good morning, gentlemen,' he cried with panting excitement, and how does the business go so far?'

'It has not commenced yet,' replied Pawley with a sickly smile.

'We are early, my dear sir, we are early. It is scarcely half-past nine yet. Give us another hour, then we shall see.'

The hour passed, but the business had not arrived.

'Our heavy parcels at the wholesale houses are stopping the ravenous maw for the present,' began to be the shelter of his excuse now. Wait until these are exhausted, and then I shall pity you, Mr. Pawley - devoutly pity you.'

When nearing eleven o'clock someone with heavy boots was heard staggering up the stairs, Harleston, who was too excited for work, exclaimed -

'Now they come, my friend, now they come.'

The door opened and a pale-faced youth bending under the weight of a well-filled bag entered. Dropping his burden he ran his eye and finger down the list in his book.

'The Workman's Register?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Two.'

The numbers were handed over the counter, three half-pence swept into the till, and the first cash transaction was over.

It was nearly an hour before a second customer asked for a single copy, but Harleston, like the prophets of Baal on Carmel, kept pushing his hopes forward, and was still sanguine.

Pawley's were well down to zero, a position they had steadily registered all along.

The attitude into which circumstances had forced Gradeley was peculiarly trying and not a little irritating to a man of his temperament and disposition. In many respects he was as unpractical as Harleston, as we know, but at the same time he could recognise ability and was always willing to defer to superior knowledge. Pawley's business qualities and success had made a forcible impression upon him, marking him out as the one man desirable to ensure the fullest success of the new journal, and Gradeley could not free himself from a certain charge of culpability in bringing such a man from his position in Cottominster into the unthankful conditions which Harleston had imposed upon him. On the other hand, Pawley was certainly ignorant of the powerful influences of Harleston's name, and Gradeley -

with a mind biased towards the omnipotence of popularity - had all along felt persuaded that such a powerful asset demanded more recognition and acknowledgment in a commercial sense than Pawley had been inclined to give it; and between these two conflicting forces the unenviable sub-editor had gallantly tried to maintain a balance with a view of hitting upon a compromise by some lucky chance. Now the force of circumstances was demonstrating the truth of Pawley's position, and Gradeley was, as usual, mad with himself for not seeing such a palpable fact before it was too late.

But the mischief was now irrevocable, and he could do nothing but stand as far apart as possible, holding himself in readiness to assist Pawley in whatever scheme of redemption he felt sure the manager would in some way advise.

With this determination he wisely kept clear of the publishing-room. Come what would, neither the financial nor circulating responsibility rested upon his shoulders, and so long as the literary form of the Register was up to the mark he would not be considered in fault. In this one respect he had no misgivings, for already both his lordship and Harleston had congratulated him upon the excellent quality of the initial number, and if there was one thing under heaven upon which the editor could speak with undisputed authority it was on such a question as this.

It was therefore with confidence that he took up the morning papers to receive the congratulations he naturally expected.

Alas, alas! No man can criticise his own work dispassionately, however honest he may be in the attempt, and Harleston was scarcely a model of probity in that direction. Where poor Gradeley expected to find some cheering commendation as solace in the hour of disaster, he found a perfect cataract of ice-cold water. The new serial was dull, commonplace and heavy, lacking every well-known feature of Harleston's work. In his new character the crisp identity and brilliant criticisms of the G. O. M. of the editorial chair was lost, and warmest friends threw the number aside with a keen pang of disappointment.

Gradeley could scarcely believe he read aright, but a second review only confirmed the first, and the third the second, until at length he was too compelled to turn from his anticipated feast of laudation with a consciousness that Harleston was an unsafe authority to follow even in his own domain.

The *Workman's Register* was an unqualified failure in every sense.

When the day was rapidly coming to a close and the continually prognosticated rush of business did not show signs of commencement, the sustained excitement, loss of appetite and the unusually long hours, together with definite premonitory symptoms of gout, necessitated a cab being called much earlier than had been anticipated, and Harleston was hurried off home, much to his chagrin and disappointment, just at the time when he was so confident the tide of success was setting in.

Pawley took another and perhaps more correct view of the cause of the editor's departure, but he had neither the opportunity nor the will to run away from the difficulty, which had to be faced by someone - and that someone was undoubtedly himself.

Harleston had scarcely left the door before he sought Gradeley and, for the first time, learning what the papers had said, at once devised a scheme of action. The sub-editor followed his chief and had a chat with Mrs. Harleston, who at once recognised the position, and granted his request for the MS. of one of her charming Irish stories - her facile pen being in reality the foundation of her husband's fame. Armed with this Pawley sought the printer before the second number had gone to press, and substituted a O'Grady's article for one on the necessity for slaughter-house reform. At the same time the extent of the edition was cut in two, and advertisements inserted in all the dailies, the manager trusting to justify himself with his lordship should such be necessary. The cost of advertising was saved by reducing the gratuitous distribution three-fourths in the second number and in the third it was entirely suspended, and the edition was further cut down to one-fourth its original size.

The new arrangement at once produced the desired effect, and when the work was known Harleston's name had its anticipated weight. The third number was nearly sold out and the *Register* had an established and moderate circulation before the editor was able to return to the office.

In his retirement he had heard nothing of the progress of events. The mere reference to business produced such excruciating spasms of gout as to prevent any mention of the *Register*, though he had been able to revise the proofs and direct the Mirror as usual, but the associates of art know well its soothing tendencies, and will readily understand how such would minister to his recuperation, while the natural belligerence of reform would provoke the gout fiend to wildest despair. Still in his loneliness he had been able quietly to contemplate what had taken place. He had not achieved the success he anticipated. Wherein lay the cause? This problem he carefully pondered, and by the time he was compelled to face the situation he had satisfied himself and was prepared with a reconstructive scheme.

The original plan as drafted by himself was one of most brilliant success if carried out in its entirety, but from his sick-room he was able to see how Pawley had insidiously modified and thereby frustrated a purpose designed to introduce a much-needed reform in the methods of publication. This discovery had much to do in hastening his restoration, and, fully determined how to proceed, he ordered his cab.

Having made no inquiries and forbidding any communication on the subject of the ill-fated *Register*, he had not the faintest idea what had taken place in his absence. But inquiries were as unnecessary as congratulations; he had business to do, and calling for Pawley at once addressed himself to the stern demands of the hour.

‘Mr. Pawley,’ he began in his most severely-injured tone, ‘I think it my duty to inform you that the publication of the *Register* has been a failure - a most disastrous failure, and I wish to know what explanation you have to offer me respecting it.’

Pawley looked at him in speechless, uncertain amazement; for cool, egotistical audacity he had met with nothing equal to this even in Harleston himself. He had no idea how to handle it on the inspiration of the moment, and when some answer must needs be given he made no attempt to explain.

‘I was sure it would be so - knew it from the first.’

‘Knew it, sir! - sure it would be so! And have you the impudence to stand there and quietly make such an admission to my face when your most damnable conduct of this business has ruined my reputation and scattered his lordship’s wealth to the winds of heaven? Are reputations and fortunes nothing better than shuttlecocks for you to play with? You were brought here, sir, with nothing to do but your simple duty, and a most glorious - magnificently glorious success was already provided for! That duty you have neglected - miserably, criminally neglected - with the result that my honoured name - deservedly-honoured name - has become a byword of reproach, and the philanthropic intentions of his lordship have been wrecked - most wantonly wrecked! Such gross mismanagement, such business incapability, such want of foresight, and such forged credentials as you have used in imposing upon me are past my understanding - beyond my feeble powers of speech to fittingly condemn; and I give you notice, sir, that when his lordship returns to town I shall hold you, and you alone, responsible for this unparalleled disaster which has overtaken his good intentions - his more than noble generosity! Silence, sir! I will not allow you to answer me. Go!’ and he pointed dramatically to the door. ‘If you dare to say one word your dismissal will be instant. Send Gradeley to me.’

It was a relief to escape attempting any suitable reply just then, and Pawley retired before his chief had time to change his mind. The answer would come, and it would be none the worse with time for due preparation.

Gradeley wished himself a thousand miles away when he heard his name mentioned, for in arranging for the *Register* the sub-editor’s room had been contrived by the division of Harleston’s wilderness, as he had frequently termed it, and through the thin partition Gradeley had heard all that had transpired.

Still, with men of choleric temperament it is usually the unexpected that happens, and in this case the rule was consistently observed. In order that the blame might be in no way divided it was necessary for the editorial staff to be commiserated, and Gradeley received an unstinted share of Harleston’s lugubrious condolences.

He listened with but few attempts to speak until his chief inquired if he had found it possible to proceed any further with the unfortunate *Register*, and then he ventured to lay a full and detailed report of all that had been accomplished before him, giving Pawley credit for the full management of the business and also for the

suggestion regarding Myra O'Grady.

The unexpected good news was almost too much for the old man, and the fact that his wife's name had been so closely linked with the retrieval of fortune was to him an equivalent of his own success. He could hardly believe it, and yet how dare he doubt! What power of misfortune could possibly withstand the force of that only greater name than his own in literature? Still there was a certain amount of credit due to Pawley for the tactful thought which suggested the employment of his wife to achieve such a *coup d'état*, and he regretted that the report had not been placed in his hands before the unfortunate interview he had just concluded.

However, weathercocks are adjusted to face the wind, and if the breezes of fortune turn, it would be a sign of derangement if the indicator did not veer accordingly. With as little compunction and feeling did Harleston change his opinions and attitudes when necessary, and so it happened that Pawley was at once recalled to receive the most abject apologies for what had been said, and afterwards congratulated for his wonderful tact and ability in rescuing the fortunes of the *Register*.

Pawley listened to his chief as before, in silence, then, assuring him of the full acceptance of his apologies, went back to his desk debating whether the arch-hypocrite might not be legitimately classed as the eighth and moral wonder of the world.

Chapter XVI – Editorial Perquisites

A generous heart may easily forgive a wrong when once repented of, but for the mind to forget it is a very different matter. The balm of charity may speedily heal a wound, but even time is often unable to remove the scar. True forgiveness lies not so much in forgetting as in the self-sacrifice we make while the heart is bleeding. It lies in the heroic martyrdom with which we ignore and endure.

Pawley had fully and freely accepted Harlestone's apology, but as he walked home that evening - his mind was too actively troubled to allow him to ride - he battled with the multitude of side issues which made attack upon him. What reliance, stability or security could he feel in a man capable of such impulses and transitions? What confidence could he repose in his most solemn assurances, or how was he to know the true governing principles of his life? Then the question doubtfully and insidiously suggested itself whether in reality there was any principle to be discovered. It was a terrible thought to occur even in connection with the meanest and most obscure individual, but when it had association with a man in Harlestone's position it was appalling in the extreme. Was the range of possibility wide enough to allow that he could be nothing but a chance bubble floating so picturesquely upon the air of popularity? And as if to give colour and confirmation to the fearful suspicion his mind reverted to what Levison had said, and Pawley gasped with horror at the inevitable culmination he saw as the sequence when the immutable law worked out and Harlestone was compelled to reap that which he had sown.

The evening was warm and he had been walking rapidly, keeping pace with his thoughts, but as the vision rose before him he lifted his hat and wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead. Of all men this one had been, almost from the dawning of memory, one of his foremost heroes, and in his confidence of him he had without a thought of doubt left Severn and Cottominster. Were all men the same if we only knew them? And his heart cried 'No!' He shrank from doing Severn the injustice of linking his name with Harlestone's, and for the first time he was conscious of a genuine regret at having come to London. 'Put not your trust in princes,' he murmured, then breathed a heavy sigh in sympathy with the experience of the Psalmist.

In company with such melancholy thoughts he reached home.

The music of her husband's latchkey in the door was always the sweetest sound in the day to Elinor, and she bounded forward to greet him, her eyes overflowing with the sunshine which flooded her soul at his coming.

'Shut the door, dear,' she cried with gentle remonstrance, as she freed herself from his embrace.

'I did so, my little woman.' Yet he turned to make sure he was not mistaken.

‘Then open it again, and let the cloud go out.’

‘What cloud, my darling?’ and he made an ineffectual attempt to clear the shadow from his face, but the eyes of his wife were too well versed in reading the signs to be deceived.

‘You need not try to hide it, my lad. I felt it almost before I saw it. What is the matter? I want no clouds when you come home.’

He imprinted another kiss on the inquiring, upturned lips, then tenderly drew her into the cosy sitting-room.

‘David somewhere says that “clouds and darkness are round about *Him*,” and under those circumstances would you not welcome a cloud?’ he asked.

‘If I were with you,’ she answered quietly. ‘But tell me what is the matter, my lad, and let the cloud either cover us both or dissolve.’

While they sat at tea, Ernest told her what had taken place, adding thereto, with the natural instinct of his impetuous nature, all the gloomy forebodings that had troubled his homeward meditations.

She listened patiently to all he had to say, and when the table was cleared took up her needlework and, sitting in her familiar place beside his easy-chair, said -

‘If you are wise I don’t think you will trouble yourself one little bit further about the matter. Mr. Harleston is usually impetuous, is getting old, and the attack of gout is certain to make him additionally querulous and perhaps unjust. But I think he forgets at once, and when he finds he is wrong is always ready to apologise as he did to-day. Do your duty, my lad, and don’t be afraid. He will discover your worth some day, and until then we must be content to wait, and we shall not hurt. If it had not been for the children and myself, you would not have given a second thought to what occurred to-day - now, would you?’ And she looked up into his face with proud confidence.

‘No! Perhaps not; but the added responsibility demands the second thought now.’

‘And it will have it, my lad, I know, but I don’t want it to worry you. When God gave me my husband’ - and she stopped her needlework to kiss the hand toying with her hair - ‘He gave me the best and truest man on earth; and I am equally certain that, “the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.” For that one reason alone, Ernest, I have no fear, but know that come what will, all must be well in the end. When I was reading this afternoon I came across this quotation, “Duties are ours, events are God’s,” and I think we should do well not to forget it. If we perform the one to the best of our ability, God must overrule the other.’

‘I am not so sure about the good husband as I am about the silver lining He gave me to every cloud,’ he replied. ‘You remember that “Perfected through suffering” that troubled me on my journey from London to Cottominster?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, it came back again as I was coming home to-day.’

‘And not to be wondered at either under the circumstances - it was perfectly natural. But why should you be disturbed at it? The thunderstorm, as well as the sunshine, is numbered among the chariots of God, and though He may change His vehicle, He is a Father still.’

‘You are right, little woman,’ he rejoined, catching the buoyancy of her faith, “therefore we will not fear though the mountains be removed”

‘Why should we?’ she inquired. Come what will we must be safe if we rest in Him!’

He was satisfied and glad to enjoy the quiet of the returning calm; she went on with her work, until presently her confidence found voice and she quietly sang: -

‘Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say
E’en let the unknown morrow
Bring with it what it may:
It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His children too.’

Those married lovers exerted a singularly corrective influence the one upon the other. Already life for them had produced a full average amount of trials and difficulties, but so long as they could meet them standing side by side they had not feared, but looked with hopeful confidence towards the future. It was when apart each knew their own weakness and misgivings; it was then the testing strain came upon their faith, their feet were inclined to slip and hearts almost stood still with fear. We are not surprised to find, in fact, we have already discovered the proneness to this in Ernest, and though unknown and unsuspected by him his wife was woman enough not to be a stranger to similar misgivings upon occasion.

Such an experience occurred to her after the departure of her husband on the following morning. Free from the danger of affecting him she very carefully reviewed all that he had told her, and pieced together straws of indications, scraps of particulars and inferences she had carefully treasured from the days that had passed, items Ernest had forgotten or facts he had failed to take cognisance of at the time. Her well-ordered mind always kept a watchful eye ahead, and she was in the habit of forecasting in view of possible emergencies, discounting somewhat the extent of the

sunshine she discerned, and preparing for the possibility of something unseen lurking in the depths of the shadows. It was with the latter she was more particularly concerned that morning. She was neither imaginative nor excitable, nor given to running forward to meet her troubles, but by that mysterious system of psychological mathematics called premonition she had arrived at the conclusion that all their trouble did not yet lie behind them, and at the thought of it she trembled and her eye grew dim. Perhaps physical causes rendered her more than usually susceptible to nervous tears at that time, and she prayed that if trials were to come it might not be in the winter when she would be so incapable of bearing her full share of them.

The gloom appeared to settle down, even deepen, as the day passed on until the hour of her husband's return drew nigh, then she made a determined effort to recover herself, and the crisp sound of his key in the door smote the clouds and let the sunshine through.

'Sunshine after shadow!' she exclaimed joyfully. 'What has happened, my lad? Tell me the good news at once.'

'What an excitable little woman you are to be sure,' he replied. 'How do you know that anything has happened?'

'Oh, the sound of your key told me so, and I can read it in your eyes, your face, your kiss. How foolish you are to try to deceive me; but tell me what it is at once.'

'Yes, darling, you are quite right,' he said, catching her in his arms and looking with a steadier gaze into her love-lit eyes. 'Perhaps I should not rejoice when my release is purchased by the misfortune of another; but I am very much afraid I am like most other men - very selfish at heart. We heard to-day that a somewhat serious misfortune occurred to Lord Shenstone yesterday, preventing his attention to business for some time, and thereby I am so far relieved from my apprehensions of last night.'

'Thank God for that,' she answered with a sense of relief far greater than he imagined, and her eyes filled, with grateful tears. 'I am truly sorry for him, dear, but I am, oh, so glad it has happened for your sake, and if it is wicked for me to be so I should like God to show me how I can help it.'

'Hush, dear, hush! you must not arraign God in that fashion.'

'I am not doing so unless God first arraigns me. If He did, no power in heaven or on earth would convince me that I have no right to ask for a solution of the difficulty in which these circumstances place us; and I am confident He would allow that I was justified in doing so. But tell me what has happened.'

Over their tea Ernest explained.

'It appears that a morbid melancholy has existed for generations in the Shenstone family - a kind of religious mania centring in the fear of being finally lost. In two or

three instances it has amounted to a complete aberration of mind, and there is little doubt but that the widespread philanthropy of the present earl has its root in the same foreboding dread. From what I can gather his father's physician conceived some plan of distracting his patient's thoughts, and kept him so well employed as to produce a considerable improvement, and it was hoped, if the same treatment was followed up in the present case, that the malady might be eliminated. It is needless to say that this has been done, with the result that his lordship has been able to direct his private affairs and occasionally occupy his seat in the House, which had never been done but twice before during the century. About three years ago, however, a great family trouble broke him down and left a legacy of the dreaded symptoms behind. But the physician at length succeeded in arousing his attention, and when his lordship proposed to found a journal upon the lines of the *Register* he was encouraged in the hobby, which has been pursued with marked beneficial effect, and when he was at the office on the day before we published the first number he was in most unusual spirits. Gradeley and I have sometimes wondered why we have not seen him since, but concluded that Harleston must have reported to him and kept him from calling while he was away. But this morning the chief got a letter explaining that certain nervous developments had recently taken place, causing the gravest anxiety, and the physician had advised a lengthy yachting cruise, where his patient would be free from all communications, and Harleston must arrange to manage the business until his lordship's return.'

'Poor fellow,' sighed Elinor; 'and the worst of it is he has no wife to nurse him through it. Ah, my lad, happiness and comfort do not always go hand in hand with riches.'

'That has been the thought most troubling to me all the day, my love. I know how I should be cared for under such circumstances, and can imagine the soul-loneliness he will experience. And yet, perhaps, as he has never known the one he may be mercifully spared the other.'

'Why, Ernest?' she inquired with some surprise; 'were he and the countess not fond of each other? 'If she had loved him, dear, she would not have left him.'

'Left him! I thought she was dead!'

'It is worse than that, I believe; but such a sorrow is best left covered and I have not inquired about it. I am truly grieved for him and wish it was in my power to do something to help in his trouble. There is one thing I can do and will do, however,' he continued, brightening up as if under the influence of a sudden idea; 'I will use the reprieve God has granted me, if Harleston will only let me have my way a little - and I almost think he will now - and when his lordship does come back he shall find the *Register* has become a success quite equal to his expectations.'

'And God will help you in it, dear; we need not be afraid of that. Here is another instance of how He

“Moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.”

It required just such an incident and circumstances to bring out all the energy and determination in Pawley's character. It made him forgetful of himself in his thought for the earl; careless as to what he had to endure personally, if he could by any means accomplish that which would be a pleasure to another. Lord Shenstone and the success of the *Register* were henceforth the twin objects of his ambition, and the obstacles Harleston could throw in his way would only be the trials necessary to strengthen his purpose.

But Harleston was an unknown quantity in the art of obstruction. He had almost miraculously escaped the destruction consequent upon his first folly, and his lordship being indefinitely out of the way he had a clear course without the presence of a restraining hand. He had a stain to wipe from his reputation. He had been too yielding to the advice of others and thereby had undermined his own success. Gradeley and Pawley were laughing at him in their sleeves; Levison looked triumphantly askance; the press had dared to criticise him adversely, but, by all the gods in Christendom and heathendom combined, he would show the varlets that the name of Michael Harleston was more than a match for the whole swinish herd.

And having formed his resolution he lost no time in putting it into execution: the advertisements in the papers were withdrawn forthwith, the original order for the editions was revived, the ladies recalled and the gratuitous circulation resumed, and Harleston outvied himself in his determination to uphold his authority, to which everything and everyone must bend.

How far he was capable of carrying this egotistical infatuation is well illustrated in the following incident.

‘Mr. Pawley,’ he exclaimed, rushing into the publishing-room one morning, congratulate me, sir - most heartily congratulate me.’

‘Upon what, sir?’ quietly inquired Pawley, who had ceased to grow enthusiastic over every new absurdity.

‘Upon the greatest achievement in my life - undoubtedly the greatest accomplishment of my career.’

‘I shall be pleased to do so; but may I not know what it is?’

‘Certainly, my friend! Of course - how stupid of me not to tell you; but really it is such an event I can scarcely believe it myself until we hold the prize within our hands.’

‘Have you won something in a lottery, then?’

‘In a lottery, sir! By the great guns of Wellington I have fought a Waterloo this morning and captured a Napoleon.’

‘And is he to be sent to St. Helena?’

‘By all the great gods of Greece I shall be the most envied man in London when the miracle of beauty - the poetic dream of mechanical construction, the triumph of handicraft - graces my table.’

‘Is it a man, a book, or a machine you refer to?’ queried Pawley, anxious to secure some coherent idea from the jumble of metaphors.

‘Neither the one nor the other, my dear sir; by St. Patrick it is an artistic production more worthy of heaven than earth, and I was fortunate enough to see it in the nick of time and secure it for my worthy self. But let me tell you what it is; and when the other hawks of art learn how I have outflanked them, when they see the illustration of it in the *Mirror*, I can see how their croaking visages will turn green with envy, and their cackling tongues will drop from their gills in paralysed anger.’ He had to pause here, washing his hands in his own delight and laughing until he courted a fit of apoplexy. But I keep you waiting, and so prevent you joining in my jubilation. As I was driving past Silverton & Coverley’s they were in the act of placing a magnificent epergne in the window - by the eternal grumbledon, sir, I tell you it is the most exquisite piece of manufacture I ever set my eyes upon. I stopped the cab and went back to admire it, coming dangerously near perjuring my soul by worshipping at the shrine of such beauty! I went inside and the manager courteously brought it back for me to inspect it. It weighs one hundred and thirty-seven ounces in silver and is valued at five hundred guineas. I congratulated, applauded, extolled the production, and after a long argument succeeded in persuading the manager to send it to me and I will have it photographed for the *Mirror*.’

‘It will be too late for next month,’ said Pawley. ‘No, sir, it is a right royal piece, and everything must give way to royalty.’

‘It will be sharp work then,’ rejoined Pawley, determined to get from the verbose to the practical. ‘Shall I wire for Crawford to come at once? What time is it to be here?’

‘It will be here in half an hour. Yes, send for Crawford; but by all the saints in the calendar don’t leave that thief alone with it for an instant or something will be missing, and as soon as he has finished with it get a cab and take it to Kensington at once.’

‘To Kensington!’

‘I said Kensington, sir! Do you think I intend to bequeath it to Ratcliffe Highway?’

‘I beg your pardon, but I did not understand that you had bought it.’

‘Bought it, sir; why should I buy it? All things sent in for notice and illustration, by the custom of the press, become editorial perquisites. It is in that that my achievement of this morning lies.’

It might be Pawley’s ignorance, but he scarcely saw it in the hilarious light of his

chief, though he said nothing. He thought it best to wire for the photographer at once and then await developments.

Some half hour later the centrepiece arrived, and the bearer asked what time the van should call to take it back. Pawley took the accompanying notes and escription in to Harleston, gave the message and waited his reply.

'Back, sir! Take what back?' roared the infuriated editor, as he sprang from his chair as if with the intention of annihilating the man who dared to ask such a question. He changed his mind, however, just as suddenly, reseated himself, and said, 'The varlet is nothing better than a parrot - I refuse to argue with him. Tell him - eh - eh - I will send it back when I have done with it. That's Heaven's own truth, for I'll swear he won't get it before.'

Events were proceeding along the line anticipated by Pawley, who had purposely left the door open that the man, who was close handy, might hear the chief's certain reply, and when he did hear he at once made bold to enter the room.

'Then I must take the epergne back with me,' he answered.

'By the gods, sir,' and every word rolled out of Harleston's mouth like a cannon ball, do you think you are dealing with a child? Do you know who I am and the power I possess?'

'I know my duty is to obey instructions, and those I have from my principal.'

'Leave him to me. I also know my duty, and if he is ignorant as to where his interests lie I must teach him.'

'That is between you and him, sir; but my orders are not to leave the epergne unless it can be returned by two o'clock.'

'Then you may call at two.'

The man looked at him suspiciously, but since the letter of his instructions was obeyed he had to be content.

'Very well, sir; but I must trouble you to sign our delivery receipt.'

'I shall do nothing of the kind. Do you think I am a thief?'

No, sir, but it is our rule.'

'Then d - n rule - I will have none of it.'

'Then I shall have to take the epergne back.'

'Mr. Pawley, did you ever hear of such an outrage in your life? In all my long experience I have not had so many insults heaped upon me as in this last five minutes.'

'I don't see any objection to signing the receipt,' said Ernest. 'The man delivers the goods and the signature is merely an acknowledgment that he has done so.'

‘Certainly it is,’ replied the man; ‘if I didn’t look after myself I should soon be in Queer Street, I can tell you.’

‘Then you may sign it and let the fellow go,’ and Harleston irritably waved them out.

‘I shall advise the manager or one of the shopmen to fetch that thing back,’ said the man as Pawley signed the receipt; the old man’s got too much pepper about him for me.’

‘It’s only his usual way,’ said Pawley.

‘Perhaps so, but it’s a trifle too sultry for me. Good morning.’

Punctually at two o’clock he returned, and fortunately met Harleston going out to lunch for the purpose of avoiding him. He had intended to be away earlier with the epergne, which he determined not to part with, but Crawford had only just finished and the impatient editor had been foiled.

‘What do you want?’ he inquired fiercely of the man. ‘The epergne, sir.’

‘Then you will not have it - it’s mine.’ Then he stepped back into the room and banged the door behind him.

The man considered doubtfully what to do for an instant, then took his departure. But he was scarcely out of the street before Harleston hailed a cab from his window, and was off with his prize to Kensington.

As may be expected a somewhat stormy scene took place between the irascible editor and the manager of Silverton & Coverley’s the next morning, the outcome of which was that, in spite of ‘the inviolate custom of the press’, Harleston was compelled to return the epergne, but the most bitter pang came afterwards when he discovered that the illustration and description of it was printed before his rage allowed him to countermand its insertion.

Chapter XVII - Harleston’s Friend

The foregoing incident fairly illustrates the character of the man who held the reins of authority against which Pawley had determined to achieve the success of the *Register*. It was a Sisyphean task, but he was strengthened for it by heartfelt sympathy with the earl, whose absence and misfortune prevented his protection of his own interests, the guardianship of which Pawley was determined to assume so far as possible without a thought for his own convenience. At the outset he was not boastful, though encouraged by the temporary advantage he had secured by his action during Harleston’s absence, and though his efforts had been at once and indignantly terminated, the effect secured could not be reversed, and Pawley was always watching and hoping for any and every opportunity that might arise to secure some additional and desirable help. He soon discovered that Harleston, with all his

boasted genius, was as ignorant of business procedure as the chair he sat in, and though every new move he made was instantly condemned when recognised, he generally managed to derive some trifling benefit therefrom, and promptly set about the promotion of some other scheme of advantage. This course was provocative of frequent scenes, but loyalty to duty and an absent principal, as well as an equally determined desire to save Harlestone in spite of himself, upheld Pawley at the sacrifice of the temporary ease and comfort he might have enjoyed had he been less conscientious.

Oh, well is it for England that Harlestone is an exception on the roll of her household names! But far better would it be if with an unrelaxing jealousy she guarded the entrance to the halls of her heroes and made it impossible for such arch-hypocrites to gain admission. Such men are only tinkling cymbals who in their brazen egotism blast the fair fame of a multitude of worthies. Our enemies take hold of them and bring them forward as specimens of those in whom we glory. Our national honour is too great to be allowed to be jeopardised in any way by such mountebanks and charlatans, and whoever is bold enough to tear these Comus-masks aside when found, and let the adventurers stand uncovered to the world, does no man an injury, but rather renders to his country a faithful and worthy service.

It is difficult to believe that Harlestone did not recognise his error, but to admit it was altogether another thing, and he resisted, while he tolerated, the action of his publisher, simply because his pride refused to humble itself, and he would not admit that he had been in the wrong. Still Pawley had the gratification to see his circulation gradually but steadily rising, and but for the incubus of the accumulating back numbers, representing a printer's bill he dreaded to see, he had confidence in being able to come successfully out of the battle. But Harlestone refused to reduce the edition. He knew the lethargic nature of Englishmen, and presently the nation would wake up to the knowledge of the journal, then there would be a cry on all hands for complete sets, and the present overstock would be found to be a most magnificent investment. With this idea firmly rooted in his mind he would allow no interference with his authority in this direction.

All went well so long as the banking account could satisfy the demands made upon it, but presently the golden grains ran low, and Harlestone had to face his bills with a comparatively empty purse. The circulation for the three months had not reached more than a third of the estimated number, and the advertisers were aware of the fact. In some cases - where a guarantee had been given - the first accounts had to be reduced accordingly, and in others forward prices had to be modified or orders were cancelled. It was then Harlestone began to regret he had not taken Pawley's advice, and would gladly have turned all financial matters over into his hands - at least until he had found a way out of the difficulty. But Pawley would have none of it. Knowing the instability of the man with whom he was connected, he had from the first insisted on Gradeley going through his own books week by week in order that

the balancing might be kept as simple as possible, and he was therefore ready with his accounts at any moment, but outside these he knew nothing, and the chief was solely responsible.

It was after one of these weekly audits that the personal question of finances first came under discussion between Pawley and his friend.

‘Pardon me,’ said Gradeley, ‘I don’t want to be inquisitive about private matters, but how do you and the chief get on about money?’

‘In what way do you mean?’

‘It’s none of my business, I know, but I was wondering whether you have had any settlement with him.’

‘Do you mean personally?’

‘Yes.’

‘No! I have not wanted it particularly so far, and as he has said nothing I have let it stand.’

‘So have I; but I shall have to get something out of him somehow. My arrangements were to be monthly, and a fourth payment is due to-day.’

‘Why don’t you speak to him?’

‘My dear fellow, I wouldn’t let him know I was short for the world, though honestly I have scarcely a shilling to bless myself with, and my wife has been at me for money for a month past.’

‘I am sorry for you, old man, but I am rapidly getting into the same condition, what with extra furniture and the other expenses of moving. I am also like yourself and wish to avoid asking him, but if my wife once tells me she really wants money, I shall soon speak, I can tell you.’

‘Then I sincerely hope she will soon want some, and when you speak he may also think of me.’

‘Perhaps the subject of this conversation was carried telepathically to Elinor, or it may be the vibrations of it hung around Ernest when he reached home, but anyhow, it is certain that that very night Pawley was reminded that they had reached the limits of their joint purse and his wife had need for a ten-pound note without delay.

He could have lost the money with much greater complacency than ask for it, but when his wife ran short there was no question about his doing it, and fortunately the disagreeable task was reduced to a minimum. On the following morning Harleston was in his most genial and approachable mood, having been entertained overnight at a complimentary banquet, with a royal duke in the chair. Gradeley and Pawley had both seen the reports of it on their way to town, but the editor invited them into his office and read the duke’s speech as given in the Times, to which they added their own congratulations and left the gratified chief to his honied meditations.

But alas for the fortunes of life! Every consummation of pleasure casts its own shadow of disappointment, and the hand that holds the rose is in danger of the thorn. Harleston had not half exhausted his self-congratulations when he started from his chair in a towering rage and recalled Pawley.

‘I have just opened,’ he said, the most insolent letter that the vilest of scoundrels ever penned. Levison writes to me and practically threatens me unless I let him have five hundred pounds by the end of the week. I shall deal with the impertinence myself in a most exemplary manner; but what can we do about the money, my dear Pawley?’

‘How does the bank account stand?’ he inquired, somewhat astonished that the matter should be in any way referred to himself.

‘Exhausted, sir - entirely exhausted! Do you imagine that I should have asked your advice had I been able to write a cheque?’

Pawley looked at him in dismay, because, though the editor had most carefully guarded all information as to finances, the receipts for sales had been somewhat considerable, and Pawley had a rough idea as to expenses, with an anticipated moderate balance at the bank.

‘I do not know what to advise under those circumstances,’ he replied; ‘the advertisement accounts are only just going out, and it will be impossible to collect them for the present.’

‘Then Levison will have to wait until his lordship returns. And that reminds me I have received a letter saying he has almost recovered, and hopes to be back in a week or ten days at the most.’

‘I am pleased to hear that. You will not be sorry to see him.’

‘Pawley, had his return been delayed another month, he would have found the last two numbers of the Register had been edited by a dead man. It was one of the most disastrous events of my life that I should be left so unprovided for. The maintenance and success of this paper under the trying circumstances has been a monument of ingenuity and a miracle of achievement.’

Now was Mr. Pawley’s time to speak.

‘I am very sorry to trouble you, sir,’ he began nervously, uncertain what to say, ‘but there is a personal matter I am compelled to mention this morning.’

‘Certainly, my dear friend, my indebtedness to you will never be discharged, therefore, if I can render you any service, your request is complied with before you mention it.’

Thus encouraged Pawley grew more confident.

‘So far, though our arrangements were for monthly settlements, I have received no payments in respect of salary - of course my commission is not due until the

accounts are in - but I shall be glad if you can let me have ten pounds on account to-day.'

'My dear sir, nothing in the world would give me greater pleasure than to accede to your most extremely modest request, but the honest fact is I do not possess ten shillings in the world.'

Pawley made no reply, but he looked curiously at his chief, wondering if he had forgotten the twenty or thirty pounds that he had laid on his desk as the balance of yesterday's audit.

'But wait,' Harleston continued, 'I will see Gradeley, and ask him to loan me the amount, for of all men you are to be considered.'

The thought of the outcome of such an application half provoked a smile in Pawley's mind, but it was checked by the idea that the suggestion was merely a ruse to cover the very palpable error he had committed, and being desirous not to jeopardise his chances of success, he accepted the situation, thanked his chief and retired.

But the day wore away without any more being said, and when Harleston was preparing to leave, Pawley had no alternative but to mention the matter again.

'My dear Pawley,' he replied, with an ill-concealed attempt to suppress his irritation, 'your impecuniosity places me in the most ignominious position I ever occupied in the whole course of my life. I am most painfully anxious to assist you in your difficulty, but I am utterly unable to do so, and therefore I am compelled to ask you to allow the matter to stand over until his lordship's return.'

'It has been in no way a pleasant subject for me to mention, Mr. Harleston, and I can assure you I should not have done so had I not been compelled. I shall be glad to allow the settlement to remain as you suggest, but I must have ten pounds to meet a pressing claim.'

'But stones won't bleed, sir, neither can you condense five-pound notes out of the atmosphere; I have an absolutely empty purse, and have exhausted my borrowing powers, how then am I able to satisfy your badgering demand?'

'Badgering demand,' reiterated Pawley. 'I think you are making a mistake, sir. I have no wish in any way to be offensive, but what I ask for is only a portion of what is more than two months overdue, and I stand in need of it.'

'And so do I stand in need of it, sir, and my friend Gradeley is also in the same condition, but I am powerless.'

'I beg your pardon, but have you forgotten the twenty-seven pounds of my cash balance this morning?'

'Cash balance I have had no cash balance to-day, or if I have I have had to spend it, for by all the snakes in Ireland, I have not a shilling upon me now. I am sorry for

you, but I can do no more. And yet - by the great Ceasar's ghost I can. Yes, my dear Pawley, I can just do it - or rather tell you how it may be done. Mr. Foxleigh called upon me to-day and tendered his advertisement again, but in doing so increased his offer to ten pounds per year, and his cheque was in his hand. It was a great temptation, almost beyond my power to resist, but I would not interfere with your prerogatives, and asked him to let it stand until I had consulted your will. There is your money, sir. Call on him to-night and his cheque will solve your difficulty.'

'Do you think that I value my principle so lightly as to sell it to a man like Foxleigh in order to escape from an unpleasant position?' he asked with a display of indignant contempt for his chief that considerably surprised the old man. Are such the methods of business you would encourage me to adopt to uphold your reputation? If so you must find some other person to practise them, for I will not.'

'My dear Pawley, no man is more sensible of the value of principle than your most profoundly humble servant, but you cannot eat it, sir, and our most cherished principles have to bend to circumstances at times, and I regard this as one of them.'

'My principles will not bend, and I decline to break them,' he replied sententiously.

'I admire your stoical probity, my friend, though unfortunately I do not possess the courage to emulate it. I thank the gods, however, who have given me such a man for a coadjutor, and I wish - most devoutly wish,' he continued meditatively, 'I could devise some plan to relieve you from the position in which I have thoughtlessly placed you.'

'Oh, never mind that, sir; perhaps you will be able to do it to-morrow, and Mrs. Pawley will be able to get along till then.'

'No, my dear sir, I should be unworthy of myself if I did not come to your assistance without delay.'

'Excuse me, but I am not aware that it is of such pressing necessity for a single day.'

'A single hour is too long for such a man to wait, and I have been criminal in not giving serious attention to your request earlier.' He had forgotten his vow of having fruitlessly exhausted every endeavour. He consulted his watch. 'Now an idea occurs to me, but I have not the time to put it into execution.'

'I hope you will not trouble any more about it to-day, sir. To-morrow will do just as well.'

'It shall never be said that Michael Harleston took willing advantage of generosity, Mr. Pawley. Your good wife honours my name, and I value her esteem. I have a friend in the city who would do this trivial favour for me a thousand times if I could only reach him. May I tax your generosity to be the bearer of a note to him,

and he will loan me the amount he as has done a dozen times before.'

Pawley hesitated.

'I would much rather wait until to-morrow.'

'I shall not be here to-morrow,' he replied; 'I have promised my dear wife to spend two or three days in the country, and shall not be with you again till Monday.'

Pawley thought that threw some little light upon the whereabouts of the weekly cash balance, but saw no way how to escape the very objectionable errand Harleston proposed for himself. He knew his wife too well to think she would ask for money before she really needed it. It was only Thursday, and if Harleston was away till Monday, perhaps Tuesday, he did not know what difficulties might arise at home, and therefore, for his wife's relief, he was reluctantly driven to consent.

The note was written and handed to him with an apologetic request to regard the matter as strictly confidential and that it might be personally delivered rather than entrusted to the man - a request Pawley could well understand and respect, feeling as he did the reflected indignity of the transaction even though Mr. Kaleb would never know how he was personally responsible for the requisitioned loan. The circumstances and the supreme indifference with which Harleston accepted them, not even evincing the slightest delicacy about the disclosure, suggested many thoughts to Pawley on his way to London Bridge, but when he found the address given and read the door plate, 'Kaleb & Co., Financiers,' he stopped, then turned away, doubtful even at that point whether to proceed or not.

The query had already troubled him more than once in relation to his chief, as to the condition of his private affairs in view of his system, or rather lack of system, in the management of the *Register*; and here was the reply. From the moment he saw that doorplate he felt convinced as to the relationship existing between Harleston and Kaleb, and there passed across the field of his consciousness a brief vision of Harleston, before which he stood aghast! The popular idea of the man was founded on a fancy dress in which he chose to masquerade, and served to hide the real identity of a reckless, unprincipled profligate, who practised evasion as a fine art so long as possible, but under stress of the inevitable ran for shelter into the arms of his friend, the money-lender. The thought of what the end of such a course must be, forced the blood back to Pawley's heart, and he trembled to think of the precipice upon the verge of which he was so unconsciously walking.

What should he do? Would it not be better to face any difficulty at home rather than be concerned with the slightest transaction of such a nature? Was such a connection really the outcome of the Divine guidance to which he had so confidently trusted? These questionings, especially the latter, brought him back to his more normal sense, and the voice within, the promised monitor and guide, spoke with no uncertain sound - 'This is the way!' That was enough. It was a mysterious, an unknown path, but, with the pillar of cloud leading him, come what would he knew it

must be right.

He turned and entered the office at once. It was a small room with a double desk and a counter running at right angles to form a small compartment into which the door opened. Two men were standing in front of the fireplace engaged in a low conversation when he entered; the one was scarcely more than a youth and red-headed, the other, to Pawley's dismay, was Mr. Blake, deacon and treasurer at Mount Pisgah.

'Ah! Mr. Pawley, how do you do?' said the deacon, affably advancing to give his hand with far more cordiality than the other had been accustomed to receive.

'How do you do, Mr. Blake?'

Such a meeting was the last in the world to be desired at that moment, but it was too late to be avoided now, though the visitor stood for the instant irresolute how to proceed.

'It is very strange we should meet in such a place,' said Blake, without appearing to notice the confusion of the other, but the world is a very circumscribed business place after all, and - let me see, what is it the old Book says? - "Where the carcass is there the eagles come." It's something like that, I know, and Kaleb is such a busy dog you never know who you will meet in his office.'

'Is he in?' asked Pawley.

'No, he will not be back before Monday,' replied the young man.

'I wanted to see him on pretty urgent business,' said Blake, and when I get here find he's gone to Paris. Well, Lucas, I shall see him on Monday, but let me introduce Mr. Pawley - Mr. Lucas is Mr. Kaleb's manager and representative, and I will leave you to him, Mr. Pawley. Good afternoon!'

'Good afternoon.'

Things were not quite so gloomy as at first appeared. Blake had learned nothing after all, and his timely departure was a great relief.

'What can I do for you?' asked Lucas, with a full sense of his importance.

'I am the bearer of a note from Mr. Michael Harleston to Mr. Kaleb, but as it is of a personal nature, I am afraid it will have to stand until his return.'

Lucas smiled knowingly.

'I think I know the nature of it,' he replied, 'and can attend to it quite as well as the "boss." Mr. Harleston is not a stranger to us.'

He held out his hand, and Pawley, feeling sure that the nature of his errand was no secret to the clerk, gave him the note and awaited while he perused it.

'I thought I knew the purport of it. He wants an accommodation of five pounds.'

'Ten pounds, I think,' said Pawley.

‘No, five is the amount. Here it is,’ pointing out the words and reading: “Please oblige by handing to bearer five pounds on my account as per usual.”

‘He has made a mistake; it is a slip of the pen, for nothing less than ten pounds will do.’

‘I can’t help his mistakes. It’s not the first he’s made by long chalks; but as he says five pounds that’s all I can let you have. You had better take five now and let him send down for the other tomorrow.’

By this time he had grown weary to death of the whole matter and was willing to end it almost anyhow.

‘Very well. Though, like Mr. Kaleb, he will not be in town again till Monday. It will have to stand until then.’

‘Will you take a seat while I fill up the acknowledgment?’

Pawley sat down while Lucas proceeded to fill up a very formidable-looking document, as he did so making such a number of personal inquiries as presently to rouse his suspicions.

‘Excuse me,’ he said, but I don’t understand why so much information about myself is necessary when Mr. Harleston is the borrower.’

‘Then you don’t know much about Mr. Harleston,’ replied the clerk. ‘Lord bless you, he’d give points to an eel in wriggling. He caught the governor napping once, but he’ll have a job to do it a second time. So when we lend him money by proxy we always grow suspicious and tie him up tight without the possibility of a quibble. If you have not been long with him, take my advice, steal a leaf out of our book and tie the old devil hands and feet or he’ll do you, or my name’s not Longley Lucas.’

Pawley did not enlarge upon the extent of his knowledge of Harleston. The clerk was not the kind of man he would choose as a confidant; even a business relationship was not pleasant, and he was anxious to get away. It might be a natural prejudice he had against men in his vocation, but bad as Harleston undoubtedly was - and he did not wonder at the precaution taken to bind him - Pawley, if he had to make the choice, would prefer his chief to the ghoulish vampire he had conceived the clerk to be - and if he, what kind of man could Kaleb be?

Lucas by this time had completed the acknowledgment, and in order that Pawley might not sign it in ignorance, recounted its nature and drew his attention to the fact that it was definitely made out to Harleston’s account.

‘But thirty shillings interest for the loan of five pounds for thirty days is most extortionate,’ demurred Pawley.

‘Those are our usual terms with Harleston.’

It was no use making further objection, so he took the proffered pen and signed the document, and Lucas, having carefully assured himself as to its genuineness,

blotted it and placed it in his desk. Then opening his cash box he spread three pounds ten shillings upon the counter.

‘What is this?’ asked Pawley.

‘Five pounds, less thirty shillings interest which we always deduct from the amount.’

‘That is no use to me. I was to have ten pounds, but by a slip of Mr. Harleston’s pen it has been reduced to five; now you wish to take the interest out of it. I shall decline to accept any such sum.’

‘You can take the full five pounds if you like, but I shall have to charge him seven for it, and you must pay me half-a-crown for the wasted form.’

And with that Lucas took the acknowledgment out of his desk and destroyed it.

‘Will there be no extra charge for ink and office expenses?’ asked the disgusted Pawley.

‘You had better be civil or you will get nothing.’ ‘Excuse me, I have the three pounds ten, and you have destroyed the receipt.’

‘Yes, I trusted you as a gentleman. I forgot for the moment you came from Harleston. Do you want the full five pounds?’

‘Yes; nothing less will be of any kind of service.’

‘The second form was duly filled up and signed, then Pawley pocketed the additional thirty shillings and was glad to take his departure. But his journey home was accompanied by serious and unexplainable misgivings.

Chapter XVIII – The Pillar Of Cloud

‘No, my lad, no!’ said Elinor, thoughtfully, shaking her head; ‘Mr Harleston has been most unaccountably strange in his conduct all the way through; I have long since failed to satisfy myself in attempting to explain his peculiarities, but I cannot believe he is a bad man until escape from such a conclusion is impossible. Just try for a moment to suppose that such an idea was true.’ Ernest could unfortunately only too easily enter into her suggestion, but the pained look which the effort caused his wife made him anxious for her sake to attempt to realise for once anything but that he knew to be the truth. She continued; ‘If Mr. Harleston is not true - who can be? My lad in such a case, I tell you I should have no vestige of faith left in any living creature! But such a thought is not - cannot be true. We misunderstand - fail to comprehend him; his powers are great, and with these it is but natural that his methods, ways and actions should occasionally transcend our own ideas also. I am sorry to differ from you, but you would not have me be untrue to myself would you? If I were capable of that I should fail to be the help God intends me to be; therefore we will come to no conclusion about this for the present, but give Mr. Harleston the

benefit of the doubt until the future throws more light upon it. Now, having done so much, let me point out one very curious coincidence in this business which appears to have escaped your notice altogether. There are some men in whom I have no confidence at all - men who I have no doubt are equally clever in villainy as Mr. Harleston is renowned for honour - and it may be that this present experience has been permitted in order that you may discover their designs upon him and save him from their machinations. You are fond of reminding me that there are two sides to every picture; what if you have caught the wrong side this time and it remains for me to turn it round?’

‘I will only be too thankful, darling; but if you think you have any clue pointing that way, let me know it at once.’

‘Has the thought struck you of anything peculiar about the name “Kaleb”?’

‘No - not that I know of.’

‘It may only be a coincidence, as I say, but it was my first thought when I took up his card that I had never seen the name spelled with a K before; it is generally C.’

‘There is nothing in that, dear,’ answered her husband, evidently disappointed at the sudden collapse of his newly-revived hopes. Such eccentricity in the spelling of a name has ceased to be a novelty among firms in London now.’

‘Perhaps so, as a rule,’ she replied, not one whit daunted by his depression, but in this case the incident is too striking for me to dismiss it without some further inquiry, especially when I connect it with what has actually taken place. Is it not peculiar that the name spelled as it is is simply a transposition of the letters in the name “Blake”?’

Ernest took the card and with ashen cheeks verified her query. He did not speak, for the discovery, rather than dissolving his doubts, filled him with new alarms - vague, intangible, but none the less to be feared.

‘We have no need to be disturbed, my lad, even though my present suspicion should prove to be correct. Before you went into the office you heard the directing voice?’

‘Yes! I was never more definitely counselled in any single step of my life.’

‘Then we have no need to fear. If God goes with us, though all the world may be opposed we shall be with the triumphant majority, and-

“Though the morrow bring a fire,

‘Twill only purge the dross;

We reach the soul’s supreme desire

And victory through loss.”

‘So long as we have each other and God I shall be content, come what will!’

He stooped to kiss the face upturned in cheering confidence. He felt that the mantle of his shadow had encompassed his wife also, but the companionship lightened the burden, and love robbed the darkness of its terrors.

When mysterious shadows first take shape in the depths of twilight’s increasing gloom, startled children draw close together, and with arms entwined around each other, still facing the terror, silently shrink backwards into their mother’s arms. So Elinor and Ernest faced the unknown, unrecognisable shadow that night, and step by step retired upon their God, and rested - safe.

The old Psalmist in his search after God and the origin of things came presently to the unsatisfactory conclusion that ‘clouds and darkness are round about Him,’ and the modern philosopher, though he has pushed the inquiry further, and most learnedly lengthened the journey, has in the end to make the same admission and reverently bow before the great ‘Unknowable.’ As the blade of wheat or the bud of a tree becomes visible only after a process of growth in the mysterious bosom of nature, and does not mark the true beginning of life, so the phenomena of consciousness only mark a stage in the development of our experiences, the foundation facts of which lie still buried in the yet undiscovered sub-self.

All unsuspected, therefore unrecognised, a strange and long-since forgotten exotic of the Master’s garden had been for some time taking root in Pawley’s experience, and now, as it began to break ground in preparation for its harvest-bearing, he only saw in its strange blade a trifle broader leaf than he had previously noticed. The voice behind him had no further effect than the astonishment at its clear, bell-like tone. It failed to wake any recognition of the passage of his intuition from the indefinite to the definite, even when on the following morning its echoes recurred to him, and he felt strengthened for the duties of the day by the confidence that they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.’

He was grateful for this sustaining power which equipped him beforehand for the demands the day would make upon him.

His first surprise was to find Harleston at the office as usual with appointments which at once refuted any idea of his intending to spend the week-end in the country, and the old man laughed hilariously at what he called his cunning joke to compel Pawley not to keep his good wife waiting for the cash she evidently stood in need of. Still he protested that he asked for ten pounds in his note, and when assured of the mistake, uttered most profuse apologies and wished to send for the balance at once. But Pawley would hear no more of such a suggestion, and ruefully mentioned the rate of interest he had been compelled to assent to.

‘You did well - exceedingly well. Far better than I should have done had I seen the arrant rogue myself.’

‘I thought you told me he was a friend of yours,’ returned Pawley, almost fearing

the disclosure which seemed to lure him on, though he was anxious to find some way by which to save his chief.

‘So he is - an almost priceless friend, in his way; but, as the immortal Hamlet says, “There comes the rub!” You are but young, just entering upon the active and important duties of life, but I tell you its exigencies are without compunction, and the man is not yet born upon whom you may rely in confidence when the hour of need arrives, unless you have a good and sufficient hold upon his interests beforehand. I am telling you secrets, sir, baring my own soul to you, but I do it for your good that you may be advised before the evil day.’ For some reason unexplained to Pawley he was in his most verbose and sentimental mood this morning, and allowed his tongue to run, whether honestly or otherwise the sequel must reveal. ‘You will find it best in all such circumstances you were compelled to place me in yesterday to seek a man who will assist you as a matter of business rather than as a friend; because you pay him for his friendship and his interest compels him to respect your secret. The fortunes of our relationship with each other made it imperative that you should know me sometimes even as I know myself, but I little thought that you would discover it so soon or I would have prepared you for it and saved you something of the shock you must have sustained. Yet I am not afraid that you will publish your discovery to the world, because in doing so it would be necessary for you to explain your condition of impecuniosity, and since no man will voluntarily expose himself I am safe with you in that our interests are in common.’

‘You may know him better than I do, sir,’ said Pawley, sorrowfully, but if ever the necessity arose with me I should try to find a better friend than Kaleb appears to be.’

‘And where would you look for him? The ideal man, for where your quest would begin, is only to be found on paper, in story books and the Middle Ages; the coxcombs who strut about in the peacocks’ feathers of distinction, fame and popularity, are nothing but tinsel and gauze when we come to know them; the princely show of wealth about which they prate is little more than boast and bombast; the costly deckings of our palaces are only imitations and veneer; the morality on which we pride ourselves is nothing but rouge and paint; but the vast parade of make-belief serves its purpose, for such hypocritical “fools we mortals be” that while we eulogise and admire, we are also cudgelling our brains to find some new deceit by which to impose upon our fellows. Now look at myself, my dear Pawley, and tell me who outside my own class - God knows those on the inside know it well enough - would have thought that I, Michael Harleston, the hero of the jubilation of the other night, the recipient of the laudations of a prince, and the feted of *savants*, would on the morrow be driven to the straits of yesterday in order to accomplish the trifling justice you were compelled to crave. But such, my dear sir, are life’s stern necessities when stripped of romance and poetry. I am now an old man, and in the course of my career - my very chequered career - I have come to know that things are seldom if ever what they appear to be. A pin-prick will always

burst the most beautiful bubble; I know it because I have used the pin with frequent and complete success,' and he paused to take an interval of merriment at the recollection. Yesterday you turned the tables upon myself; you made a sudden rent in my stage mantle, and discovered the rags beneath. But I learned your secret at the same time, Pawley; all the advantage was not on your side; but there is no necessity for us to be other than honest with each other in the future, and we need not confess to the world that we have nothing to cover our nakedness but the tawdry popularity it has been pleased to throw around us.'

'Character is more than popularity,' asserted the mystified Pawley, who listened as if to the unintelligent babblings of unhinged senility rather than to the blunt and honest confessions of a man who was not only a prominent member of a Christian church, but also regarded as a model of morality and honour in the various spheres of art, literature and science.

'As an idealist and mystic I am entirely at one with you, my dear Pawley, but such poetic dreams and artistic imaginations are out of date in the utilitarian age in which your lot and mine have been cast. The romance of the old fairy tales has still a powerful fascination for the vulgar crowd, but culture, refinement and progress have outgrown the fiction, and demand that life to be successful must be accommodated to the ever-varying necessities of the hour, and he who would stand first among mankind is the man who possesses the greatest amount of tact and adaptability.'

'Am I listening,' asked Pawley, and the tremor in his voice indicated the depth of his feeling, 'to the man who wrote Christ among the Highland Crofters?'

'Certainly you are. Why, did you imagine that you had fallen asleep and were being entertained in a Grecian camp?' and the old man revelled in the merriment he found in Pawley's discomfiture.

'I would I had fallen asleep, almost in the sleep of death, before I had heard what you have told me.'

'It is your reason and understanding that sleep, my dear sir, and while they do so, your ignorance suffers from nightmare. By the thunders of the great Jove, I shall have to take your education in hand and enable you to see another side of life! Do you not remember how the immortal Shakespeare reminds us that every man has many parts to play in life, and the still greater and holy Apostle Paul assured us that he found it necessary to be "all things to all men," in order that he might gain some? It is this long-neglected scriptural application which we have discovered the value of and re-established to-day. The great mass of humanity are brutal, brainless and non-intelligent, but one degree better than a herd of swine. So long as they can eat, drink and sleep they care for nothing, and when we wish to move them we move the trough, tickle their sense of smell, and they rush towards the knife. Why need we trouble more about them when they are satisfied; the bacon they furnish is just as good as if we taught them science and philosophy. So we write them fairy tales, and

enjoy the quiet they afford us while they sleep. You have grown dissatisfied with wallowing in the mire, but as yet the strange surroundings of an intelligent world are new, uncomfortable and unappreciated by you; you must have patience, my dear sir; you will understand things differently in the near future, and then you too will be able to rejoice in what is called the fulness of life.'

'But what place do you leave for God in your newfangled scheme?' he demanded in a firm, authoritative voice.

'Until you have mastered the rudiments of this life, which is so new to you, it is impossible in any intelligent degree to grasp the details. But allow me to give you an illustration which I hope will serve to direct your thoughts. Art and poetry can never be governed by the laws of physical science, neither can any adaptation of religion make it conformable to the requirements of trade and commerce. The Sunday has most wisely been isolated from the rest of the week and set apart for the recognition and observance of religion, and its limits are jealously guarded against secular infringements; then, we naturally inquire, when we grant such a stringent protection to religion, should we not equally guard the mart and exchange against encroachments in the opposite direction?'

'Mr. Harleston, I am sadly at a loss to say all that I feel just now. I am restrained from speaking as I would, but I must say something in answer to you or I should be untrue to myself, and the great mass of humanity you hold in such contempt - I should be untrue to God.' He spoke with slow deliberation, without a trace of passion, though his lip quivered and his eyes grew bright with unshed tears. Harleston made no attempt to interrupt him, but rather regarded him with a look of good-humoured surprise at the serious tone he assumed. 'You have done me the honour to class me somewhere above the great mass of men. I was not always so, but in my determination to elevate myself, I fixed my eyes on certain men as models for my life - heroes to emulate, if you will, examples to assist me in reaching a goal. One of those men was yourself. For some time past that model has trembled in its niche, but this morning your own hand has dashed it down, and it lies shattered at my feet. Have you no regret for this - have you no pity for the ruin which lies around me?' Then, clearing his throat, his voice struck a higher key and his confidence returned. But I have to thank God it is only one of my minor idols which has fallen. You deplore or rather make sport over the absence of character in the multitude; may not your sense of this be due to the fact that the god of this world has blinded your eyes, and being a bond-slave to your own will, you have no freedom, no ability to appreciate character which is the forerunner of the Christ, the Saviour of the world? The crowd may be but a swinish herd, it may also be that history repeats itself and the legions of devils pass from the superior animals into the swine and work their destruction. But what brought the devils into the men? is the question I can imagine God will ask, and when He does so someone or more among the professing hypocrites will have to answer Him.'

‘In that day, my dear friend, if ever such a contingency should arise, the task will fall upon the shoulders of our parsons, who are paid to argue and advise upon all difficult and abstruse matters. You see we are wise in our day and generation. We may be somewhat negligent - some may think even unjust stewards - but our lawyers still assure us that we are commended for what we do. If we are wrong we shall have to plead misdirection and throw ourselves on the clemency of the court.’

Pawley knew by oft-repeated lessons that it was worse than useless to argue, even before he discovered the entire absence of any moral quality in a man he now recognised as probably a more despicable hypocrite than Foxleigh, and he turned away fully persuaded that the morass through which his present path lay was far more treacherous than he had hitherto conceived. Still the pillar of cloud went on before, and he could do no other than follow while he watched and prayed.

His greatest comfort at this time was found in his work on the Common, where his audiences increased week by week, and the grip he took on the people gradually tightened and drew them towards himself. Some few of his original supporters deserted him, and it was known that the most determined efforts were being put forth secretly to destroy the whole work, but the outsiders, to whom he specially addressed himself, showed a continually-increasing appreciation of his labours, and it was certain that any open attack upon him from the church would cause a most serious defection among the young people, probably a disruption that would be serious in its history; it was therefore necessary for caution and strategy to be employed, but in the minds of some few who had an insight as to what was transpiring behind the scenes the result was nevertheless a foregone conclusion.

Many admirers, if not followers, of the preacher gathered around him week by week, but London life is particularly favourable to a feeling of isolated reserve until a man has won his battle single-handed, then he is able to command a following, and a host of assistance rushes to hand when the war is over. With Pawley it had as yet scarcely begun, and so, surrounded by friends, he still stood very much alone.

Presently a Nicodemus interview was sought, and the inquirer made it known that the question was being discussed among not a few as to whether some arrangements could not be made to continue the meetings indoors during the approaching winter. The knowledge of so much interest in his work spoke volumes to the preacher, and he willingly promised to consider the matter.

Victor was equally gratified, and a meeting of the workers was called from which a deputation was chosen to lay the proposition of securing a mission hall before Mr. Pinchbeck. The suggestion was gall and wormwood to Foxleigh, but after all the delay he could invent he consented to a consideration of the matter at a congregational meeting which was usually held to inaugurate, the winter's work during October. The announcement caused a considerable satisfaction when made on the Common. Many would much rather the new departure should be made entirely free from any chapel influence, but there was a certain financial risk in the

undertaking which was regarded with shyness, and if Mount Pisgah left the arrangements as at present there would be no material objection.

The annual meeting was held that year a fortnight later than usual, owing to Mr. Foxleigh's absence from town, but in answer to Pawley's invitation a large number of his congregation were present at the tea, and more still at the after meeting.

Tables were spread in both schoolrooms, and while the usual congregation naturally took the higher, the common people were content to be with Pawley in the lower room.

Five o'clock, the hour announced for tea, had arrived, and Mount Pisgah prided itself upon its punctuality.

'Have you seen Mr. Foxleigh?' inquired the minister of Pawley.

'No.'

'But one of the younger deacons informed him that the great magnate had been detained a short time.'

'That is most unfortunate,' drawled the reverend gentleman; 'but we must commence. I believe most of these friends are of your congregation, Mr. Pawley; I shall therefore be glad if you will announce grace at the same time we sing it upstairs.'

'Very well;' and the minister withdrew.

The keynote was scarcely struck when Foxleigh rushed into the room.

'How dare you?' he demanded of Pawley.

'What is the matter?' he inquired.

'How dare you take my place!'

'I did it because Mr. Pinchbeck requested it.'

'You cur!' he hissed. 'You shall smart for this before the night is out, or my name is not Samuel Foxleigh.' And he bounced out of the room and upstairs.

No one heard what passed, but the pantomime was noted and inferences drawn therefrom. During the tea many ventured to suggest what the outcome of the conference would be, basing their forecast on Foxleigh's demeanour.

These prophecies proved to be not very wide of the mark.

The business of the evening gradually led up to the one important and interesting item, and when at length it could no longer be postponed, Mr. Pinchbeck introduced it with very cool and nervous reticence.

Foxleigh was at once upon his feet, and began a vigorous speech by reviewing his connection with the church and the services he had rendered to its finances. His next point was the peace and unanimity that had existed from the time of its foundation

to the advent of the unknown individual who had commenced these services, since which time there had been continual and increasing friction and ill-feeling materially affecting the welfare of the church. Then he proceeded to give his own version of Pawley's officiousness at the tea table, which had grown most encouragingly under the influence of the personal warmth he contributed, and he drew therefrom a vivid indication of this local preacher's determination to usurp the position which he (Foxleigh) had so long, and, he trusted, not unworthily occupied. Under these circumstances it was impossible for him - whatever regret it might cause him to do so - to come to but one decision, and that was that the voice of that meeting must choose between himself, who had been so long and well known to the church, and his upstart rival who had only come to London yesterday!

In this determination he remained inflexible. Pawley had to be sacrificed, and the mission, so far as Mount Pisgah was concerned, came to an end for the present.

Chapter XIX – The Sting Of Foxleigh’s Threat

Is Christianity a failure? We ask the question not with a view of rousing all the bitter antagonistic feelings of sectarian champions, but candidly and soberly with the world as it really is before our eyes, and all its needs, sorrows, degradations and oppressions open to our view. Has Christianity fulfilled the expectations of Him who commissioned His disciples to ‘go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’? In the three short years of His personal ministry He secured so much of success that ‘the common people heard Him gladly’; all men sought for Him, so that ‘He could not be hid.’ He promised that those who believe on Him should do His works. He and the gospel are both still the same, but is the effect of its proclamation also the same?

It is no use throwing Free Church stones at Roman glass-houses, or hurling Papal bulls at Protestant schismatics. Our work will never be done by wrangling over the negligences of others. Let us be honest and ask ourselves whether our own hands are clean, whether we are faithful workers or idlers by the wayside, bosom friends of the Master like John, or merely pharisaical quibblers like Simon.

That there is need for such heart-searching inquiry is abundantly evidenced by the following admissions.

One of our leading religious newspapers, representing more particularly the Free Church movement, says in an editorial: -

‘Whether we look to High Church mummeries, or to the smug inanities of many a popular and paying chapel, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that . . . Christianity is indeed a very ghastly failure.’

A prominent clergyman of the Church of England emphasises the fact . . . that the heathen, by the mere increase of their birth-rate, are outnumbering all the converts of all our societies, so that there are millions more of heathen to-day than a century ago. He calculates that, owing to this cause alone, it will take the Church Missionary Society twenty-seven thousand years to convert the gain to heathenism in a single year in China.

A well-known Member of Parliament, presiding at a Tract Society meeting, states:

‘In London we are sometimes inclined to say that the heathendom of the upper classes is more conspicuous than the Christianity. It seems as if a large portion were losing even the faintest regard for religion.’

In the Romish Church an English cardinal very boldly asserted that: -

‘The luxury of the West of London, in its wealth, has produced a rankness and audacity of vice, hardly veiled, or open and barefaced, such as was found hardly in

Rome of old or in any city that I know of in the civilised world. . . . The condition of the streets of the East End no imagination can conceive, except those who have looked upon it; and few of you have ever seen it. Those streets are full of every kind of temptation - active temptation and tempters who ply the trade.'

Such testimonies require no comment; they are not the accusations of hired slanderers, but the candid admissions of prominent officials within the different communions. Do such facts give us cause for boasting or congratulation? How and why is it? Is it not time the question was honestly faced? 'But to whom shall we go' in order that we may learn the truth, discover the sense of our weakness, and amend the evil? There is only One to whom we may profitably repair - He who has erected the only standard by which we may measure true, and therefore the only, Christianity. 'By their fruits ye shall know them!' He at once will put His finger upon the cause, and we shall hear Him say as in the beginning.

'Abide, in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burnt.'

Churches and institutions are but aggregates of men, and it is the individual not the organisation that has to be engrafted and abide in the Christ. There is no saving power within the Church save that we carry thither by the 'Christ in us,' and the words are burningly eloquent from their historic significance - 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' We know it, but are we honestly willing to acknowledge it and return to 'the way, the truth and the life,' by which alone the heritage can be regained?

As the Church is to-day she is powerless - 'can do nothing.' The fact is indisputable, the evidences are undeniable. Intelligent and honest men are turning in disgust from her coquetry with the world, from her adultery with Mammon, and loathe the blasphemy with which she boasts herself to be the 'virgin bride of the Lamb,' even while she publicly lies upon the bosom and receives the embraces of her paramour. Her apostasy has made the name of Christ a byword, and subjected Him again to the gibing sneers and opprobrious taunts of His enemies as they wag their heads and pass Him by. Judas no longer hangs himself, but stands beneath the cross ostentatiously counting his ill-gotten gains and ridicules the impotence of the victim he has sold.

This is why the Church - not Christianity - is a failure. She may claim to have bestowed the blessings of civilisation upon humanity and point to the philanthropic institutions she has reared, but history throws the lie back in her teeth and charges her bigotry with opposition and oppression all along the path of progress. Civilisation is to-day what she is in spite of the Church, not by her favour, and the shades of Macedonia, Armenia and South Africa arise to attest the fact that she will throw her

protection over bloody wars of extermination on behalf of her paramour rather than follow her Christ in extending goodwill to men.'

Mount Pisgah Church had spoken, made its choice, and the traditions of its history had been most satisfactorily maintained. It was not - never had been - in sympathy with mission work, except by proxy, and it was a great relief to the majority of the membership to know that the tentative sanction which had been permitted to the objectionable freak of some of the younger people was now at an end. It was also to be hoped the road-side enthusiast would take the hint, accept the inevitable, and withdraw to some community where his powers would be appreciated and applauded. Foxleigh had done a great thing for the church by the firmness and promptitude with which he acted, and such of his supporters who did not retire in dignified silence gathered around the great man to offer their congratulations for his valuable services.

The decision, however, was not quite a unanimous one. There were a few who were more than pained at the turn events had taken - genuine salt were they, the preservative influence of whom was the salvation of the institution; true prophets of the Lord, who, though hidden, wielded an influence of prayer restraining the axe being laid to the root of the tree. They had rejoiced and taken courage in the work that had been going forward; now their joy was turned to weeping and their faith was too weak to oppose the destroying flood. Such few lingered a while and in their lingering drifted near to Pawley. They had nothing to say, but pressed his hand in a way which spoke of sympathy more eloquent than words, and the knowledge of it was valuable at such a crisis, since it told him he was not alone.

But there was a third party present, who were neither so numerous as the first nor so silent as the second - the men who represented the congregation on the Common. These, not so punctilious about 'religious' dignity, nor so fearful about giving voice to their feelings, were smarting under the first shock of recognition that they had unwittingly fallen into the trap Foxleigh had so ingeniously prepared. He was known to these men, was one of the prominent examples they ever had upon their tongues as reasons why they avoided religion, therefore under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that they took the opportunity of speaking their mind, and the friction of many voices produced a warmth gradually rising to a threatened conflagration.

'Gentlemen!' cried Pawley, mounting one of the forms and speaking in that strong but quiet tone he used to secure silence on the Common - a voice like oil upon the troubled waters producing silence and attention to what he had to say - 'Gentlemen, I hear the name of Christ being lightly spoken in your disappointment and anger at what has taken place. Let me ask you not to use that name in connection with the proceedings which have just closed - if He has been smitten in the house of His professing friends, it is for us to sorrow with Him. If they have turned what should be a house of prayer into another Gethsemane, it is not for us to augment it into a

Calvary. The decision we have heard - driving you and I alike away from all connection with this place - is not in any way associated with Christianity; it is the voice of a professionalism which isolates itself as did the Pharisee of old from the publican. It does not need that I should remind you who received the blessing, and I am thankful to-night to remember that the same God still reigns. I have not attempted to speak so far - of what use was it to do so? Christ Himself was silent when before Herod, and any defence I might have put forward would have been equally useless. But now I wish to say one word before we separate. I may not be welcome to the use of the room - I know I am not - but since it has been built in the name of the Master I serve, and since I have been present and seen Him again traitorously sold to His enemies, I demand to say one word on His behalf before we separate. In the natural resentment with which you will speak of what has taken place to-night, will you try to bear in mind that you are in no way criticising Christianity, but rather an empty formalism which is what it is simply because of the absence of the Spirit of the Christ who has assured us that unless we have His Spirit we are none of His? Christianity is ever like its Founder - an invitation ever standing open - "He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." It is an open door, and no man can shut it. The door of Mount Pisgah has been shut to-night. Let us turn quietly away. Temples made with hands are not necessary to worship the Nazarene whose gospel I have been preaching to you, and beneath the free dome of God's heaven we can still worship Him, no man daring to make us afraid. Let us go back there, and the Father who knoweth our needs will lead us by a way we know not towards the end we seek.'

His counsel was accepted, the argument was not reopened, but quietly the company dispersed and left Foxleigh gloating over his triumph.

Elinor was far from strong at that time, and the excitement had been almost too much for her, but Ernest at once drew her into a side street, and full of the confidence which never forsook him in an emergency, cheered and soothed her as he gently led her homewards.

'Oh, sir, I am so glad you are here!' exclaimed the agitated maid as she opened the door. 'I am almost frightened to death.' Then the girl gave way to her overstrained feelings and burst into tears.

'Why, whatever is the matter, Lizzie?' he asked kindly.

'There's such a dirty, beastly old man in there,' she answered, pointing to the front room. He knocked at the door about an hour since and when I answered it he pushed past me and asked for you, saying he should wait till you came home.'

Ernest's mind intuitively reverted to Foxleigh's threat earlier in the evening, then he smiled at the absurdity of the connection. The implacable deacon's power was fortunately confined to his church influence, and now that he had done his worst there was nothing further to fear in that direction. Still his mysterious visitor was

difficult to account for. Elinor was more disturbed than himself, but that was only to be expected, and comforting her with the assurance that there was a mistake somewhere, he sent her upstairs under the care of the maid while he proceeded to interview the stranger.

As he entered the room he saw a decrepit, repulsive-looking old man, wearing a dilapidated top-coat with a cape, the skirts of which lay plentifully upon the floor. A worthless soft felt hat was lying at his feet, and his chin rested upon his hands clasped over the knob of a bludgeon walking-stick. He made neither sign nor motion as the door opened; so, thinking he was asleep, Pawley approached and gently shook him.

‘Who are you and what do you want?’ he inquired.

The old man, without expressing either surprise or resentment, allowed his head to fall aside just enough for his dull yellow eye to glare at the speaker, and without noticing the inquiry asked, -

‘Are you Mr. Ernest Pawley?’

‘I am! Who are you and what do you want?’

The old man let his stick fall to the floor, and at once showed a considerable amount of vivacity.

‘All right, my popinjay, keep your ‘air on, an’ I’ll soon let yer know who I am. We’ll come to bizness at once - my beautiful little cockatoo,’ and he began to fumble in his pockets.

By this time there was not much doubt in Pawley’s mind as to the explanation; the man was a harmless, wandering lunatic, and while he felt glad the poor fellow had fallen into his hands, he was also thankful that the girl had so marvellously escaped. He still continued to search through the pockets which were so palpably empty, muttering all the time something which could not be heard, and Pawley, leaving him to his engrossing but innocent occupation, re-opened the door and from the foot of the stairs called, -

‘Lizzie.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘You might run down as far as the White Horse and see if you can find a constable. The poor fellow has lost his senses.’

‘Haigh! haigh! haigh!’ screamed the old man in a kind of parrot laugh, ‘hold on a bit, my noble Solomon, p’r’aps yer may find I’ve copped your senses as well as my own, before I’ve done wi’ yer. Don’t yer think you’d better ‘ear what I come for before yer send for the bobby?’

‘Wait a minute, Lizzie,’ said Pawley; ‘let me see if I can get anything intelligent out of him first.’

Then he closed the door.

‘Good agen, my hooptem-doodem-doo; now hadn’t yer better sit down while the heathen Chinee teaches you a lesson or two?’

He was still searching his pockets..

‘Now, what is it you want?’ said Pawley, not without some warrantable impatience. If you are not what I imagine you to be, let me assure you that I am not the man, neither am I in any mood to be trifled with. If you have any business with me let me know it; if not the sooner you are out of this house the better.’

‘Don’t ‘ee strut about too much, my pretty peacock, or p’r’aps I shall have to pull some of yer fine feathers. As soon as I can find my - ah! ‘ere they are, as they say at church - let me see, what is it? -

“Now I ‘ave foun’ my title clear.”

‘Lord, how I used to sing that afore I lost my senses! An’ on’y to think I ‘ad put them to roost in mi ‘at an’ was furrudin’ for ‘em in all mi pockets.’

As he spoke he found a packet of papers on the floor, and drawing a chair to the table, opened and spread before Pawley one he recognised as the receipt given to Lucas for Harleston’s five pounds. He now recalled that its repayment had become due that day, but it was nothing to him.

‘Let me ask yer reverence if yer know this ‘andwritin’ an’ sig’ature?’ asked the old man, jubilantly.

‘Yes, that is my signature, but -’

‘Now, wait a bit, my little tom-tit. Of course it’s yours, an’ now you’ll understand my position an’ authority, won’t yer? Yer made a bit of a mistake when yer thought yer was the on’y tin can on the dump, didn’t yer? Now yer see there’s another one, an’ a bigger one, and that’s me, so you’d better be civil, my ‘igh cock-alorum, or I shall order the band to play an’ you’ll have to dance to the music.’

‘I wish you would speak so that I can understand your meaning. Your presence appears to have some reference to five pounds I had from Messrs. Kaleb and Co., for Mr. Harleston; but this is nothing to do with me, neither have you any connection with the business.’

‘Lawd! an’ ain’t yer a sweet innercent to be sure! What a ninny yer mother must ‘a’ bin not to ‘a’ named yer Brussel Sprouts! But yer ain’t the furst o’ yer kind I have had to deal with, an’ if I have lost mi senses I think I’ll be able ter teach yer the ropes in a single lesson.’

‘Will you tell me what it is you want?’

‘Now, don’t be impatient, mi little gay an’ festive, an’ you’ll fin’ it all come right in the washin’, an’ the dryin’ won’t take long. This is your sig’ature, you say?’

'Of course it is, on behalf of Mr. Harleston.'

'Don't be a fool, man,' cried the fellow, irritably, for the first time using language that was plainly to be understood. You're not going to get out o' the soup in that way. Harleston's name appears 'ere as the agent introducin' the bis'ness - who's got to take 'is bit o' corn for doing it, but the bill o' sale's yours an' you've got to settle it.'

'Bill of sale!' ejaculated Pawley; 'I gave no bill of sale!'

'Didn't 'e, though,' chuckled the old man; then I should like ter know what this is? An' my name is Jonas Clamb, official broker to Kaleb and Co. This money was due at twelve to-day, an' not bein' paid, I've come for the same. Let me see what it is - seven poun's principal an' two poun's five expenses, that makes nine poun's five together, which I wants at once, or else yer mus' make me comfor'ble fer five days at seven-an'-six a day before we clears yer out. Now then, what's yer goin'g ter do?'

The nauseating intoxication of despair took hold of Pawley as he listened to the facts over which the old man gloated with piquant relish. Of all the situations of life from which to extricate himself he was most ignorant of this. He knew something of the inhuman excesses such men were capable of, but nothing of any action he could take to save himself, and the critical condition of his wife added acuteness to his suffering.

His cheeks blanched and grew expressionless as marble, his lips quivered, his eyes rolled wild and red and dry, but he never spoke. Clamb rubbed his hands in glee and cried 'ah-oo-oo' with the whistling gusto of a legion of fiends who drag another victim into hell, while Pawley reeled and swayed like an oak that wrestles with the fury of a storm only to prolong the fight, the end of which is all too painfully certain.

'Oh! Elinor! my life, my love, what have I done?' he cried at length. Then his voice failed him, there was a gurgling in his throat, and stretching out his arms in mute appeal - for his cry of Mercy! died upon his purple lips - he fell senseless at the feet of his tormentor.

The incident was full of comedy to Clamb, and he had no wish to hurry its performance, but Elinor had heard the fall, and a moment later burst into the room to learn its cause. The broker cursed her for the interference, though she neither heard nor noticed him, but threw herself beside her husband and lifted his head.

'Oh, Ernest, my lad, what is it?' she cried. 'Open your eyes - look at me dear! It is I - Elinor! Wake up, my lad, and tell me what has happened?'

The sound of her voice or the sympathy of her love reached and recalled him; it was stronger than the embrace of unconsciousness. They two were one, and his wandering, affrighted soul returned to itself when his better and more needy part cried after him. Her need became his strength, and in his extremity he discovered a peace which had ridden to his success in the chariot of the tempest. On the border line of oblivion he had heard a voice even more musical than her own - a voice that

answered through the blackness, 'All's well,' and in confidence he returned to take up his cross again.

'Don't be alarmed, my love,' he said presently; it will all come right, but there is a mistake somewhere, and this man is a bailiff who has taken possession of our home for the five pounds I had from Kaleb's.'

'What is he going to do?' she cried, clinging to her husband as if she also needed to be protected.

'I don't know yet, my darling; we have to think what can be done, but I can do nothing just now.'

'Well, I ain't p'r'aps as 'ard as I looks,' replied Clamb, at the sound of whose voice Elinor drew her husband further back. 'Yer see, I've got the job ter do, an' I'm goin' ter do it. Now, 'ow much o' the needful 'ave yer got about yer?'

'We have no money,' responded Elinor, and if we had Mr. Harleston would have to pay you. He borrowed it.'

'Look 'ere, my little Jenny Wren, if you take my advice you'll leave this bit o' bis'ness to me an' yer 'us-band.'

'My husband's business is mine,' she answered proudly, and though I may be of no service to you, I can help him. If you refuse to go to Mr. Harleston for this money, call here any time after six to-morrow evening and I will have it if I have to sell something to pay you.'

'Oh, no, you won't, my little extricator; none of yer little games'll do for me. 'Ere I is, an' 'ere I stops till you pay me or I clears yer out, an' none o' yer selling anythin' to do it either.'

'What is it to do with you how we get the money so long as we pay you?' cried Elinor, indignantly. 'And you are bound to give us a little time to do it.'

'Yer 'usband promised to see it paid by twelve o'clock to-day, my little love-bird, an' I'm going ter wait till I gets it. Till then the 'ouse an' all in it belongs to us. Now yer ain't got the "dibs," yer says, well, then, I 'as to stop,' taking off his overcoat and throwing it into a corner. I shall be yer visitor for five days, an' then take all yer got when I goes.'

'But, Ernest, you won't let him stop, will you?' she pleaded. 'It will kill me to have such a horrid man in the house so long!'

'Now, you look 'ere, an' take my advice, my little pet lamb - '

'Keep your insults to yourself,' cried Pawley, flinging aside the hand Clamb reached towards his wife. The law may give you power to seize our goods, but it will at least protect us from your insolence.'

'Excuse me, young man, but there's too much o' the cabbage about you to try to ride 'igh 'orses, one of 'em 'ull eat yer one o' these days for grass. Don't yer know as

I'm the officer of the law? So what's the good of yer thinkin' as yer word is better'n mine? I knows what I can do a darn sight better'n you can tell me, so now, what are you goin' to do?'

'What can I do?' pleaded Ernest, recognising at last how completely he was at the man's mercy.

'That ain't neither 'ere nor there, guvnor. If you've got anything to suggest, I'll 'ear it. But I've got my work to do, an' I'm boun' to do it.'

'Yes, yes! we know you have,' replied Elinor, anxious even at the expense of another rebuff to try her influence over him again. But you said you are not so hard as you appear to be. Now, listen to me for a moment. You, who know this work so well, can easily see that we have never encountered such an experience before, and, if you will, are able to give us a word of advice as to what is best to be done. In all London we have not a single friend to whom we can go. Perhaps you have never been so badly placed, but one day you may find yourself so situated, and quite as unexpectedly as we are to-night. Help us with some suggestion just now, and then you will have a right to expect such assistance whenever you may need it.'

Clamb listened to her at first with the cynical contempt he always felt for women, but the intensity of the faith she possessed in the force of right touched his sleeping conscience, and before she finished she made him feel uncomfortable and wished she would leave him to settle the business with her husband.

'Look 'ere, Mr. What's-yer-name, yore missis 'ad better keep 'er lip out o' this an leave us to settle it. Now what do yer propose?'

'What can I propose,' he replied hopelessly, when I don't know which way to move?'

'Well! It ain't the thing ter do, you know, but I'll gi' yer a tip if yer like.'

'God bless you,' said Elinor, gratefully.

'Now, missis, you just keep quiet! I wish yer'd get out and leave the guv'nor to me; yer knock a fellow all over the shop, yer do, an' interferes too much wi' the bis'ness. Now, mister, how much of the ready can yer stump up?'

A week previously Pawley had obtained a small advertisement for his old Cottominster journal and only that morning had received a cheque for the commission. It was money badly needed for other matters, but he was heartily glad he had only taken from it the two shillings for their tea; the balance now appeared to be God's provision to liberate him in his hour of need, and he was sure of its success. Drawing the money from his pocket he counted it upon the table.

'Forty-eight shillings,' he replied.

'Humph! That ain't much good anyway. Can't yer scrape up another two quid somehow?'

'We have not another shilling now,' said Elinor, but my husband can get it early in the morning - could have got it to-night had we known it was so imperative - and you shall have it. You can make this do now, can't you?'

'I wish you'd let us alone, missis,' cried Clamb, irritably; I 'ates wimen in bis'ness as I 'ates ole Nick.' Then, addressing himself again to Pawley, he continued, 'Yer see, it's like this, my expenses so fur is two poun's five, an' they mus' be paid first.' As he spoke he counted the amount and transferred it to his pocket. Now, if yer could gi' me another two poun', that is the interest for another month, we could p'r'ps arrange it that way, an' afore the time was up yer could pay the lot.'

I can get it and pay it in at the office before twelve o'clock, even though I do not get the whole amount from Mr. Harleston. Surely you can grant me that amount of time.'

Clamb shook his head.

'I am not so sure about it,' he said; 'yer see it's contrary to law to go out when yer once in. An' another thing - how are yer goin' to get the money? Yer mustn't part wi' anythin'.'

'I shall get the money from Harleston,' he replied confidently.

'Well, I'll try yer.'

'Oh, thank you, and you shall not be disappointed,' cried Elinor, joyfully, assured that they had at length reached the extent of their trouble.

'I'll mind that,' answered the old man; yer won't catch me on the 'op, I can tell yer. Now, look 'ere, if I consent to go out, yer must sign this permission for me to come back at any time I choose,' and he spread the document, already prepared for signature, on the table for Pawley to read. Yer see we always looks to be done and makes provision agen it.'

'But what guarantee shall I have that you won't be back in an hour?'

'None at all,' the fellow replied; you'll ha' to trust to our honesty about that. Still, they're the on'y conditions on which I goes out, an' yer can please yerself about it.'

Pawley had to accept them. They would at least be free from his presence for the night, and that would give time to consider what was best to be done. So he took the pen and signed the permission. A moment later he closed the door upon their unwelcome visitor.

On the following morning Pawley sat looking abstractedly into the fire, with his neglected paper lying on his knee. The night had been fruitless in suggesting any device or method of procedure, but it had given rise to many doubts as to Harleston's proving to be any refuge in the storm that had overtaken them. His wife entered, tired and careworn, the pink tinge around her eyes telling a silent story of secret tears.

She was standing behind his low basket chair before he knew of her presence, and clasping her hands around his neck, drew his head backwards and kissed him.

‘Cheer up, my lad,’ she said softly, things are not so black as they look, I am confident.’

‘Why so, dear?’

Among Elinor’s - weaknesses, if you will, she had a wonderful faith in bibliomancy, and made no secret of a practice which on more than one occasion in the time of need had proved to be a comfort and assistance beyond measure.

‘I have just thrown open my Bible and the verse it directed me to was the fourth of the ninety-first psalm.’ How does it read, darling?’

‘“He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be thy shield and buckler!”’ she replied. ‘Surely we must be safe with such an assurance.’

‘Yes, love, come what may we shall be safe. All the experiences of our past are unanimous upon that. And yet in spite of it I am contemptible in my unfaithfulness. Elinor stole around his chair and took her favourite seat at his feet, forgetful that breakfast was waiting. There had come a lull in the storm and the peace thereof was tempting. These trials of faith might indeed become “big with mercy,” and “break in blessings o’er our heads,” if we only bore the stress, stood the strain and waited in confidence. But oh! how formidable that “if” is when the tension is upon us. God’s salvation can only be clearly seen when we reach the tether of our extremity, and yet we always turn traitor and run away when the clouds begin to lower; there are few who can stand still and see the salvation of God! So far as I am concerned, darling, I deserve to be left to fight my way through this business as best I may, for my lack of confidence in Him last night, but He will deliver us for your and the children’s sakes.’

‘“He knoweth our frame, He remembereth we are but dust,”’ she answered with a view to reassure him as he would comfort her. ‘Christ knew our weakness when He promised to perfect His strength therein; and if we confess our frailty without rejoicing in it, I think He would rather have us to be so dependent on Him than strong to do without Him.

*“If we were not so frail and weak
But strong to fight and to prevail –
Firm to resist, to dare - defy,
To conquer - neither flinch nor fail,
For God and love no need must be,
And life one hell of tyranny!”*

‘God bless my angel wife,’ he said buoyantly; ‘if you don’t carry my burden, you will always manage to get rid of it somehow,’ and he rose to take his departure.

‘But you have not had your breakfast.’

‘Yes, darling, I have had something better than tea and toast.’

Then he took another kiss and went away to face the unknown.

Chapter XX – The Church – An Outside View

Among the regular congregation on the Common was one man who from the first had particularly attracted Pawley’s attention by the keen interest he appeared to take in the movement from the beginning. He was always present, following the arguments closely, offering neither assent nor opposition, but assuming the attitude of one who carefully weighed what was advanced, and was anxious to arrive at some definite conclusion as to the real position of the man who associated himself with a church he occasionally lashed with such an unsparing hand. He was one of those men towards whom the mind of a sympathetic speaker naturally gravitates, entering into the atmosphere of its honest doubts and difficulties, reading its frequent changes by the lights and shadows flitting unconsciously across its face, and finding there an anchorage from which to sway the multitude.

Pawley understood the value of such a man’s presence and his eye lighted with satisfaction when Sunday after Sunday it fell upon the well-known form of Albert Gerhard.

He was a tradesman, a pawnbroker, whose business was very near to Mount Pisgah, though in no sense was he connected with the church. From a religious point of view he was a backslider, and once in a short chat he had with Pawley he honestly avowed, ‘When I see what they make of the men they get hold of, I am glad they count me among the publicans and sinners. Of course I was a lad once, and then like Paul I did a good many childish things - one of them was to join a church - but I am a man now and prefer to act as a man, so I have left it and think for myself.’

Pawley would never talk goody-goody and quote Scripture in any attempt to reclaim such a wanderer, but nevertheless he was not a little gratified to know that Gerhard took more than a passing interest in the discourses he delivered, and though he had so far had but two or three brief opportunities of exchanging views with him, he was assured that the pawnbroker wished him well and secretly admired the work he was doing.

As Pawley passed down the High Street on his way to the station the cheery, musical voice of Gerhard accosted him.

‘Good morning, Mr. Pawley. How are you? I was just reading about last night’s affair.’

There was only one affair associated with last night in Pawley’s mind, and at the thought of it being already public property he started visibly. He saw his mistake

instantly - he might have known the pawnbroker would not speak cheerily of such a trouble - and at once did his best to hide his confusion. But Gerhard's eyes were quick, he noted the effect and though he said nothing did not forget it.

'About me, in the morning's papers? Nonsense! What relation do I bear to the news of the day?'

'Perhaps more than either you or I imagine,' said Gerhard, quizzing him curiously; but I didn't think the matter down below,' indicating the church, 'hit you quite so hard as it seems to have done. Foxleigh, with his eye always on business, saw a chance for a free advertisement, and he did not lose it; but if the editor knew the rights of this thing, whoever sent this report would never send another.'

'It's not worth troubling about,' responded Pawley, having by this time quite recovered himself. Last night's decision will only help to make our work on the Common more successful, or I am very much mistaken. We have simply to help ourselves for the future rather than depend upon Mount Pisgah.'

'Oh, it won't hurt us in any way,' replied he, nonchalantly; 'but one can't help laughing at the idiotic fools who think churches ought to attract honest, common-sense business men, while they allow such charlatans as Foxleigh to control the stock market of heaven, and make God move just as they like to pull the string.'

'But God and heaven are not the tools of such hypocrites.'

'Then why do you let them run the churches. Such a system of management is not peculiar to Mount Pisgah - it's universal. The man with the heaviest purse soon rises to the top, and very few questions are asked, but the poor devil who needs a little help - no matter how honest or deserving he may be - is chucked out into the mission-room in the back yard. Look here, Pawley - directing his attention to the window - 'if you were to come into my shop in an hour's time and tell me the label on that ring marked "guinea gold and real stones" had fallen on to that cricket ball and was making fun for passers-by, I should thank you and correct it at once; but when we do the same with the church we are only insulted with opprobrious epithets, and the laughing-stock remains.'

'There is a great deal of truth in what you say, but I for one am doing my best to remedy it.'

'I believe you are; but you saw last night that the church as a body is opposed to you. As they are, things are very satisfactory to the office holders and majority of the members; with the microscope of self-conceit they study and extol their otherwise invisible virtues, but their vices are carefully excluded from the field of vision, and therefore do not exist because not seen. That is what disgusts men like me with religion; the whole Foxleigh crew stink in the nostrils of honest men - their frauds and inhumanities are being exposed every day - and still they are allowed to pose as ornaments to the churches, who ask us not to judge, treat them with charity, and if the stench of their corruption becomes too unsavoury we are asked to forgive them

as we hope to be forgiven. But there is no such plea put forward for the poor devils who have been ruined by their villainies. It makes my blood boil every time I think of it. That is why I left the church, and I mean to stop outside until it practises what it preaches, and adopts its professions as a principle of life.'

'I don't think you would care to apply your excuse for isolation to your regular business.'

'Why not?'

'You do not deny the value of, or the necessity for, a true religion, but you very rightly object to the prostitution of it as a cloak to hide the nefarious practices of men like Foxleigh. At the same time you fail to see that your absence only tends to strengthen their position by weakening the power of those who would drive them out. If a man came to you and succeeded in pledging a crystal as a diamond ring, would you, on making the discovery, be justified in refusing to make any further advances on jewellery?'

'Certainly not; but you jump too far when you go from the transaction to the determination at a single bound. Suppose when I make the discovery that the stone is only a crystal I go on to make other inquiries and find that there exists a gang of swindlers who are generally circulating these imitations. I should go at once to the wholesale dealers and put them on their guard. But suppose further that I discovered these wholesale firms knew all about it, and were willing to ignore the fraud on account of some substantial benefit they were receiving. Should I not under such circumstances be wise to avoid all dealings in diamonds, especially when in case of a prosecution I should have the evidence of recognised experts against me?'

'Yes, under such circumstances you might be justified. Still I think I can carry my argument a stage further. If you possessed a diamond as an heirloom you would not cast that away because of the imitations?'

'Certainly not, but you cannot use that against me without inconsistency, and I shall trip you on your own argument.'

'Do so if you can.'

'The other Sunday I heard you say that we cannot inherit our righteousness as we do entailed estates, but every man must seek and find the pearl of great price for himself. Now if this is correct - and I believe it is - I have no family heirloom in this respect, and while there are so many spurious stones abroad I am not going to worry myself about them.'

'But there are incontrovertible tests of genuineness; an honest man will not deceive himself.'

'You may think so, but I think in the matter of stones I can show you a case where you would hesitate even in the presence of an infallible test. Suppose you wish to buy a diamond, and as an expert you ask me to choose one. Now we have exactly the test

we require by which the merest tyro may assure himself of the genuineness of the stone, if he chooses to use it - if it will scratch a ruby or sapphire it must be a diamond. But the stone I recommend you fails in the test, though I assure you that it is not only real but the finest stone among the group. What will you do?

‘You are right, Gerhard; I should pause and obtain further advice.’

‘And that is just the position in which almost millions of men and women stand to-day in relation to religion. There is a test given to us by which we are supposed to be able to distinguish the true from the false - “by their fruits ye shall know them” - but when we honestly apply it to the great majority of clergymen, parsons, deacons and leaders of your churches - representative men of the gospel of to-day - what do we find? To be charitable, they are not in any way to be distinguished from other men. They lie, equivocate, deceive and practise all the cunning arts of fraud known to the world, and only differ from it in the profession they make of being better than others while they are so doing. I tell you, Pawley, I am speaking well within my book, and am not retailing gossip when I say that the doings of leaders of some churches I know is enough to take the breath away from a footpad or a prostitute.’ ‘But if all you say is true,’ answered Pawley, wearily, ‘it does not affect true religion; this is but hypocrisy.’ ‘Then why not clear it out, make a clean sweep of the den of thieves, rather than shield and refuse to believe they are what all men know them to be, and stop your practice of calling honest men infidels because they refuse to associate with such candidates for the police and divorce courts! Can you wonder if some of us do come to doubt the existence of a God when we see such blasphemy going on in His name and no effort being made to upset it? I suppose you will say there are a few good men to be found among them occasionally, and, for their sakes He keeps quiet. But there,’ he continued, returning to his usual indifferent attitude, ‘it doesn’t interest me, and so I’ll let it alone. But it always bothers me why you can’t be honest about it if you must have your Sunday show - for that is all it really amounts to. Why not drop your hypo-critical pretension of reverence and call your church-going a Sunday parade; make it a concert or a lecture if you choose, but for heaven’s sake let us hear something intellectual and up-to-date; put it on a level with a flower show, bazaar, or garden party, and at once our objection would be gone and we could join you; but when you claim that such assemblies are composed of people better than the common run of men, that they meet “to worship God in the beauty of holiness” and represent “the white-robed throng” on earth, well, all I can say about it is that I don’t think much of your ideas of holiness and white robes, and the heaven those people are going to - that is, if they get what they deserve - has no attractions for me.’

‘Don’t try to make it worse than it really is, Gerhard. God knows it is bad enough.’

‘Worse than it is! I only wish I had your power of speech for one hour next Sunday on the Common; I would make the ears of Brixham tingle with what I know, I can assure you, and then should not be able to do my subject justice. But I would try and make some of the hypocrites see themselves as we outsiders see them, and if

they had one vestige of honesty left in them, they would tremble at what I know from experience is done in the name of Christianity. Take only the cases of three of the most prominent deacons or officials in this neighbourhood - and two of them are at Mount Pisgah. Foxleigh sent his father abroad, and allowed him to starve to death in Australia, because the old man's presence would interfere with the son's religious progress at home. Then there is Blake, who, under the fictitious name of Kaleb,' and he narrowly watched his companion as he spoke, 'is one of the most rapacious money-lenders in the city, and has wrongly ruined more homes than there are days in the year. And surely you know Vermont, the churchwarden of St. Lucifer's, with his snowy hair and innocent smile, who went to prison only last week for keeping a whole block of houses for immoral purposes because he could get a higher rental than otherwise. These men are samples of your official Christianity, and yet you wonder that such as I keep away from it.'

'Still you must not forget that there is another and happily brighter side to the subject.'

'We don't forget that; but why don't you get the Church to bear the fact in mind? Why don't you people keep your eyes open, and when you see a man is not what he ought to be, clear him out at once, and save the honour of your community, not wait till the earthquake of an exposure shakes your whole temple to pieces? I know as well as you do that there is another side to religion, but I also know that the better side is not to be found in your churches as they are to-day.'

'I am not going to deny that there is a great deal of truth in what you say, but even though I admit it all, and an effort is made to get rid of the element you object to, how can it be done unless such as you will come inside and help us?'

'I have not been unthoughtful of the work that lies before you, but I don't care to take any share in it, I can assure you. These fellows have got the upper hand, and they will fight like devils to keep it, and it will be a bad lookout for the men who attempts to dislodge them, especially as the parsons will side with them for the sake of their salaries. That is another little difficulty that lies before you - the parsons in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred are so by profession rather than by conviction, and, as such, have considerably more faith in a rich deacon than a visionary God. The call of the Deity they worship is always towards an increase of salary rather than an extended opportunity. We had a good instance of that last night; Pinchbeck knows as well as I do the good you have done on the Common this summer, but Foxleigh's hand is on the purse, and the parson knows which side his bread is buttered. Can you wonder if we doubt the existence of God when we see such things as this?'

'I can't do that, Gerhard; I know there is a God, have proved it as a personal fact, though "His ways are higher than our ways" and frequently we have to trust Him where we cannot see Him, for "His ways are past finding out."'

‘Well, then, let us say that if I had a little of your faith, and you had some of my suspicion, we might both be better men,’ he returned lightly, as if to dismiss the subject. But both you and I are too busy to say more about it now - in fact, I should not have kept you so long, but I have an idea in my mind, and I want to clear it up. Is there anything wrong? If so, can I be of any service to you?’

The question was put with a blunt and pointed force Pawley had no time or strength to evade. He lifted his eyes, but said nothing.

‘Come inside a minute,’ and Gerhard stepped back into the shop.

Then Pawley, ever ready to recognise the presence of God’s guiding hand, answered his friend’s inquiry with confidence, and told him all that had occurred.

‘Some few of us had a mysterious hint of something being in the wind last night,’ he replied. It was suggested to us that we should not put too much confidence in you for a few days, but I little thought that the worst would show you to be so firmly in Blake’s grip as you are. What are you going to do?’

‘I started to the city earlier than usual to see Harleston as soon as he arrives.’

‘But have you got the money?’

‘No, I hope to get it from him.’

‘My gad, man, you must be at Blake’s and pay it by ten o’clock, or your house will be stripped by twelve.’ Then, hurrying round his counter, he said, here, give me an I.O.U. for seven pounds, and I will lend you the amount.’

Pawley was overcome by the unexpected generosity of the offer. Then he shook his head.

‘I am not able to say what I feel at such unlooked-for kindness, but I should be wrong to trespass upon it to such an extent. If you will lend me two pounds, however, I will take it and pay the interest at once. That will give me time to get the principal, and I shall be safe.’

‘But you will have to pay another two pounds interest.’

‘I would rather do that twice over than trespass on your kindness. Let me show you that there is at least one honourable man in the Church.’

‘Well, I won’t waste precious time in argument, but you are doing a very foolish thing not to take it all. Will you have it?’

‘No, thank you a thousand times.’

Gerhard put the two pounds down, and Pawley gave the required acknowledgment.

‘Now take my advice and hurry up, but mind you make him renew your bill of sale or he will have you.’

Pawley hurried away with a light heart, but Gerhard watched him go down the

street with very mixed feelings as to his anticipated success. He knew Blake.

At the station Pawley met Victor and they went into the city together.

‘I am glad to see you,’ said the latter coolly, because, after what took place last night, I am afraid I shall not be able to be with you on the Common again. You see, you have such queer ideas, and say such strange things, that I was afraid there would be a beastly row about it, and it’s not pleasant, you know.’

‘Well, Victor, I thought of all men you were made of different stuff to that,’ was the quiet reply. ‘Still, if you think I am wrong, I am glad you have the courage to tell me.’

‘Don’t misunderstand me, Pawley; I don’t think it is you so much as Foxleigh and the Mount Pisgah people, but two of us, you know, will never be able to fight the church.’

‘And so you think it is more generous to leave me single-handed. You think it better to betray a cause - even though right - than suffer for it, forgetting the promise - “If they suffer with Him they shall also reign with Him.” Are you willing to give up the hope of one in your cowardice of the other?’

‘I am not going to give it up, but don’t you think, in face of Foxleigh’s opposition, you might discontinue the meetings at once, if we begin again next summer?’

‘When you first suggested the scheme you knew what opposition we should meet with, and in spite of it we have had a grand success. Why should we be untrue to ourselves and God by allowing Foxleigh to undo all our work now? Have the men we have gathered around us no claim to consideration?’

‘I know all that,’ he replied evasively, and I feel like a coward in running away from you, but it makes a fellow feel so beastly mean when your chapel chums cut you for being a “ranter,” or smile cynically as if something had gone wrong, while others treat you with open contempt. Of course I should like to stay with you, but I never thought it would make all this fuss.’

‘I see where it is, my friend; you had a secret hope that there would be a certain amount of *éclat* about this work when we had overcome a temporary opposition, and now you are disappointed. I never looked for such things, and am more than content with what has been done. Take my advice, and let it alone in the future; the man who undertakes such a work must be prepared to sacrifice anything and everything for the Master if he is to succeed. At present you are not prepared to do this, so let it alone, but if at any time you feel that you can leave all and follow Him, no one will be more glad to welcome you back than I shall. Till then God bless and keep you.’

They were outside London Bridge Station, Victor was about to take a ‘bus, but Pawley was walking across the bridge. They took each other’s hand in a warm grip, and Victor climbed to his seat, sorrowful to break his companionship with a man who was ready to continue the struggle against such overpowering odds.

Chapter XXI - A Brute At Bay

Longley Lucas, managing clerk and general factotum of Kaleb and Co., was, in his own estimation, one of the guiding spirits of the destiny, not only of London, but, beyond the metropolis, of Great Britain and the empire in general. As yet the early bloom of manhood had but lately made its appearance upon his upper lip, but his head was ruddy and ambitious, and the Capital had received him without pausing to inquire into his antecedents. Not in the capacity of a toiling artisan, nor marching in the ranks of the vulgar herd did he come; he was no common clerk or grumbling junior in the Civil Service. Nature had been kind to him - endowed him with genius, brains, foresight, intuition and every necessity and provision for producing a man of mark and distinction. He began life as a financier, among the sinews of existence, and as yet it was more than rash - absolutely insane--to attempt to indicate the brilliant career along which he would roll to the zenith of his inconceivably glorious goal!

Such a distinctive landmark in the fields of civilisation and progress was not to be trifled with but commanded the greatest respect and deference. If at the outset of his career he condescended to wipe the dust from his patent leathers upon the heads of the mob, it was kind of him, and the said mob ought to thank him most humbly for deigning to notice their presence. If in passing he became so familiar as to help himself - humorously, of course - from such pockets as he could reach, the favoured individual had occasion to smile and lift his head above his fellows on account of the distinction thus conferred upon him.

Few men have opportunity for personal acquaintance with great minds, and Longley Lucas considered himself to be one of the first of his time, therefore Pawley should have been thrice happy.

But to judge of his feelings by the lights and shadows flitting across his face as he passed over London Bridge he was neither happy nor pleasant.

As he reached Adelaide Place the first boom of St. Paul's rolled over the city, striking ten o'clock. He gave a sigh of relief and opened Kaleb's door. Lucas was standing with his back to the fire putting the finishing touches to his manicure operations. He casually raised his eyes as the door opened, put on his wolfish business smile when he recognised his visitor, but otherwise did not interfere with his employment.

'It's you, is it?' he said, his smile increasing into a hard, fiendish laugh. 'What an obedient puppy you are to answer my whistle so promptly! If you go on like this I really believe we shall make a prize dog of you presently. Well, have you paid my man out, or have you brought me the money?'

'Where is Blake or Kaleb?' demanded Pawley, ignoring the insult. 'I prefer to do business with the principal this time.'

‘I am the principal so far as you are concerned. Have you brought the money? If so put it down at once; I have no time to waste over such as you.’

‘I have called to hear some explanation of the contemptible manner in which you treated me yesterday.’

‘You had all the explanation we give last night. Have you paid our man out?’

‘Am I not entitled - ’

‘You are entitled to nothing, but we are entitled to everything you have, and shall take it unless you pay up at once. Do you propose to do so?’

What was the use to argue, protest or insist. The man was as inexorable and tyrannical as death. Words were only wasted upon him, and insistence would only serve to prejudice the case. Pawley wished now that he had taken Gerhard’s advice and brought the whole of the money.

‘Your man says I may pay the two pounds interest and have the loan renewed.’

‘The man knows nothing about it, and I refuse to renew the loan.’

‘But why?’ asked Pawley, all his worst fears reviving, a circumstance Lucas was quick to see and take note of, since it afforded him an opportunity to amuse himself.

‘That is my business,’ he replied coolly.

‘You have taken advantage - ’

‘We have done nothing of the kind; you have tried to do so, but we have been too sharp for you. If you are not able to pay now you will be less able to do so in a month, and we always shake off defaulters as soon as possible.’

‘I am no defaulter,’ cried Ernest, his cheeks indignantly aflame at the accusation.

‘No! Then I have made a mistake,’ returned the other, tantalisingly.

‘I am as honest as yourself or your employer; and had I known the truth of the circumstances into which I had been entrapped - ’

‘Entrapped!’

‘I said so,’ for Pawley’s indignation was ill-advisedly getting the better of him. Had I known you were so exacting to the moment I would have taken pains to have been clear from you at any risk.’

‘So you could have paid us, but claimed privilege for your position and connection with Harleston, eh? Now you have to learn what the trifling mistake has cost you.’

Pawley began to see the implacable determination of the man to have his bond and nothing but the bond; and since he knew that Blake and Kaleb were really one there was no shadow of doubt as to the true meaning of Foxleigh’s threat. He could also now divine how useless any effort to come to terms would be; nothing short of full, complete and immediate settlement of the claim could save him. His reluctance

to accept a kindly offer in all its full generosity was again producing - as it had done before - a harvest of trouble which might have been avoided. Again had he preferred to judge other men by his own sympathetic and easy-going nature, only to find his expectations groundless and illusory.

‘Do I understand definitely that you will not accept the interest and renew the loan?’

‘I will not.’

‘I have not the whole of the money, but - ’

‘That is enough; if you cannot pay we shall seize at once. There is no use fooling over the thing.’

‘Excuse me. I have a friend who has offered to lend me the money, and what I wished to say was, if you will not renew it I will be here before twelve o’clock and pay the whole.’

‘I shall not wait another ten minutes, but wire to our man to clear you out at once.’

Again Pawley made a mistake, in his ignorance of the ways of these men.

‘But your man is not there.’

‘Not where?’

‘At my house. He left last night. I paid his expenses and he promised if I would be here before twelve with the interest you would renew the loan.’

Lucas smiled, leisurely closed his knife and returned it to his pocket, then began to give more undivided attention to his visitor.

‘Did you sign any agreement when he went out?’

‘I gave him permission to come back again if necessary.’

‘Signed it?’

‘Yes.’

‘That’s all right. He’ll be here presently, and I’ll have your little nest swept out before dinner time.’

‘But you must give me five days; the law will not allow you to do just as you choose.’

Pawley scarcely knew what he was saying, or how to proceed in his extremity. He was fighting the air, and the inhuman wretch before him enjoyed the torture he was inflicting all the more because he was well aware of the exquisite agony it was causing his victim. Stoical endurance only serves to irritate and vex such natures as Lucas’s, but the quivering, tearing, unendurable suffering of sympathetic souls supplies a ghoulish feast of delight they love to linger over, watching the result of

every new and fiendish development.

‘When you get clear of us, take my advice, find your grandmother and teach her to suck eggs. Clamb knows what he’s about, but we never expected you would be quite so innocent as to sign that paper. We need not give you five minutes now, and you won’t get it either.’

‘What have I done that you should take all these advantages of my ignorance? You know I am as honest as yourselves; why have you no pity, mercy, or sense of right?’

Lucas laughed hilariously.

‘Ah, ah! All the luxury in this business lies in the advantage. You have been such a clever devil since you came to London - so awfully fly. And only to think that all the time you have been as blind as a bat. Oh, my God, this is too good for me to have all to myself; Kaleb and Foxleigh would give twenty pounds to see you just now!’

‘If Mr. Foxleigh knows of this, and has suggested such procedure in retaliation for anything he imagines I have done to him, send for him and I am quite prepared personally to suffer what he may deem to be compensation for my offence; but my wife has done nothing against him’ - and at the thought of Elinor his voice became husky and his eyes filled with tears - ‘she is not strong just now, and any great excitement might kill her. You are not married perhaps, but you have a mother - sisters; for your remembrance of them I ask you to have mercy on her. Grant me only one hour and I will pay you everything.’

‘I have to look after myself and leave women to do the same. Besides, we have already taken your wife’s condition into consideration as a little additional flavouring to the general relish. But you need have no fear for her - she’ll come through it all right; it’s women who die at such times, not cattle!’

‘God help me!’ wailed Pawley. Then the man rose within him, and without a thought of consequences he aimed a violent blow at the dastardly coward across the counter.

Lucas stepped back, visibly cowed at the unexpected demonstration his taunt called forth, and with a sigh of relief he saw the door open, and a gentleman - evidently a stranger - entered.

His coming was sharp and peremptory, as of a business man engaged in important matters of moment; yet he was confident, deliberate, almost leisurely as he closed the door. The face was strangely pale, cold and placid for one who had flung the door open with such an expression of activity, and the contrast was still more marked in comparison with the almost jet-black hair. His eyes were piercing, raven-hued, behind which a lambent flame trembled like a distant danger-signal not to trifle with suppressed and hidden forces. His lips were firm, thin and twitching with authority in spite of a pleasant smile which clothed his face with the softness and delicacy of the bloom on a peach. In fact, the man was a distinguished and

mysterious contradiction - a volcanic iceberg, a sympathetic autocrat, a protecting thunderbolt - a man at once to be obeyed, feared and courted.

‘How do you do, Mr. Pawley?’ he asked affably, offering his hand as if he and the distracted man had been lifelong friends.

‘How do you do?’ was the only response he could make, not having the faintest idea as to the identity of his unknown friend. Enough for him just then that it was a friend.

‘You are not looking quite up to the mark this morning.’

‘I am not altogether as I would like to be.’ Should he go on and follow the impulse prompted by what appeared to be an invitation to his confidence? Who was this man who had intervened at such a critical moment, like the protecting hand of God? Yes, he would venture, and in a few sentences he made the necessary explanation.

‘The stranger listened to his story without betraying the slightest feeling or surprise, and when it was finished he turned towards Lucas, who had previously received no notice from him, and inquired with an authority the clerk would gladly have set at defiance had he dared, -

‘Where is Blake?’

‘I - I - . Well, he is not here at present.’

‘So I observe. Surely he is not growing nervous or conscientious, and was timid about meeting Mr. Pawley,’ he essayed with delicately-veiled sarcasm that told with admirable effect.

‘He generally consults his own convenience. Had you an appointment?’

An older and wiser man would not have dared the retort, but the stranger let it pass.

‘No! I only make important appointments.’

‘What may your business be? I am Mr. Kaleb’s manager.’

‘You may use his own name to me.’

‘Kaleb is his business name. May I know who you are?’

‘You may know that I am not an applicant for a loan; I think that may serve our purpose for the present.’

‘Then what is your business? My time is important, and I have none to waste.’

The vague composure of the stranger irritated Lucas visibly and was rapidly forcing him into his habitual official pomposity.

‘You make it valuable rather than important, I believe. Do you think you will be able to understand a little matter of business outside your usual groove?’

The question was kindly asked, but Lucas could have crushed him for the

humiliation of it.

‘I am quite competent to attend to the business of this office.’

‘I am glad to be assured of that. Now, listen very carefully to what I am about to say, or the consequences may be more serious than you may imagine.’

‘Perhaps I had better send for Kaleb.’

‘Call him Blake to me.’ It was a command quietly spoken, but Lucas knew he had to obey it. No! you shall not send for him. If he runs away from responsibilities let him also lose whatever advantage might arise from being present now.’ As he spoke he laid upon the counter a small packet of papers he had drawn from beneath his Inverness cape, the first of which he carefully unfolded and offered to Lucas.

‘I think this is one of your discharges?’

‘Yes, it seems to be so.’

‘Seems to be - what do you mean? It either is, or is not. Is it so?’

‘Yes, it is.’

‘And this also?’ presenting a second, and so on for some half dozen.

‘Yes!’

‘Now these, I think, are warrants for seizure of goods?’ taking one from the lower half of the packet.

‘Yes, that is a seizure in default.’

‘And everyone of them,’ answered the stranger, deliberately refolding and tying up the packet, has sufficient evidence of conspiracy and illegality about it to secure a long term of imprisonment if the case should be proceeded with.’

‘That’s nothing to do with me; I am only the clerk and must do as I am told.’

‘And upon the same plea I suppose you would forge a cheque or steal a bank-note. Now, listen to me; I have received these with a view of taking such proceedings as may be necessary, but as Blake is not here I am willing to offer you an alternative. Take a list of these names.’ He had to obey. Now you may tell him he has the opportunity of making restitution in each of these cases during the next month. If he fails to do so I shall proceed. Now for yourself and the part you play in the business. Why do you refuse to renew Mr. Pawley’s loan?’

‘Because I have been instructed not to do so.’

‘By whom?’

‘Mr. Kaleb - Blake, I mean.’

‘For what reason?’

‘He is not bound to give me his reason,’ was the dogged attempt to evade a direct reply.

'Don't prevaricate with me. Answer my question.'

'Because he wishes the transaction closed.'

'Why?' Still in the same calm, relentless determination to have the truth.

'How do I know?'

'Answer my question.'

'You had better see Mr. Blake - let me call him.'

'Why were you not to renew this loan?'

'Because he is wanting money for a large advance, and I have to get in all I can.'

'That is a lie! Now you are in my power more absolutely than Mr. Pawley is in yours; I can give him his money and set him free at once, if it suits my purpose to do so. You cannot get away, therefore make no attempt to trifle with me. What reason did Blake assign for not renewing this loan?'

'What business is it of yours?' he asked in defiant desperation.

'We will see.' Then, directing his observation primarily to Pawley, he said, 'I shall have to leave you for a few minutes, my friend, but I have someone within hailing distance who will be able to provide against any further molestation until my return. I simply wish to obtain warrants for the arrest of these so-called "philanthropists," and will be back shortly.'

His evident intention to carry out this plan threw Lucas into a panic such as only the basest and most unscrupulous natures can possibly betray.

'What is it you want to know?' he cried.

'Why will you not renew this loan?'

'I believe Mr. Foxleigh does not wish us to do so.'

'What has Foxleigh to do with it?'

'Nothing that I know of.'

'So you do allow outsiders to interfere with your business sometimes. This looks like another case of conspiracy, and it suits my purpose admirably to investigate it at first hand. Now will you allow me an equal privilege with Foxleigh?'

Again it was more a determination expressed than a favour solicited.

'I can't. Mr. Blake may if he likes.'

'Blake is not here.' Then to Pawley, 'Where is your two pounds? I am not going to settle this matter as I first thought, but your case shall either convert or destroy this conspiracy.'

Pawley placed the money upon the counter.

'Take this most extortionate interest and give me a receipt renewing the loan.'

'I can't do it.'

'You can and will.'

'Won't you wait until you can see Mr. Blake, and I will give you an undertaking that nothing shall be done in the meantime?'

'You refused to give my friend an hour to go to Brixham.'

'I only obeyed instructions.'

'It's a lie; you have exceeded them at your own will.'

'How do you know?'

'That is no business of yours; sufficient for you that I do know, and let the fact of it be a caution as to how you keep faith with me. Give me the receipt!'

'If I do it will only be under compulsion.'

'That is one of your staunchest friends, I believe,' he rejoined with the nearest approach to a smile he had yet betrayed; surely you will not object to it.'

Lucas was brought to bay. There was no way of escape; even his hoped-for deliverance in the arrival of Blake forsook him, and with a dogged, cunning reservation of revenge in his mind he wrote out the receipt and flung it on the counter.

His antagonist took it up and read it carefully.

That will do so far as a receipt, but now you must endorse it with a specific guarantee not to enter his house nor in any way to molest him until the expiration of the thirty days mentioned, by the end of which time I will see the money is paid.'

'The renewal carries all that.'

'It would do so were I dealing with honourable men, but since that is at present more than doubtful I must be wary. Always to act in view of the worst I believe is one of your axioms; permit me to profit by it in this instance, and preparing for a possible contingency to have one case so perfect against you that escape will be impossible.'

'And who the devil are you to dictate to me in this fashion?' cried the rebellious Lucas, who could no longer suppress his rage at the humiliation he was compelled to suffer.

'One would almost suppose I were your master by the influence I possess,' he replied pleasantly, and calm as ever. Then, assuming a stern, commanding tone no longer to be trifled with, he added, Endorse that document as I instruct you!'

The rising ruler of the empire had to thrust the leek through his clenched teeth. But he ate it. Then his tormentor took the amended receipt and finding it to his satisfaction handed it to Pawley.

‘Tell Blake,’ he said with significant deliberation, that if he breaks that bond by so much as an insinuation he will never forget the consequences.’

Then taking Pawley by the arm the two withdrew.

‘Let me say one word to you,’ commenced the Unknown before the other had recovered himself sufficiently to voice his feelings. ‘Who I am, where I come from, or how I know so much as I do, you need not exert yourself in any attempt to ascertain for the present. Let it suffice that I know of you better than you know me, and in what I have done this morning I have simply fulfilled the duty of one servant of the Master to another. Whatever may be the result you need not be afraid; so long as God is with you there is no need to fear what man may be able to do against you. Be faithful unto Him and when we meet again I trust it will be under more favourable circumstances.’

‘Will you not allow me to write to you? My heart is too full of gratitude to speak just now.’

‘I know it, and will accept that in full discharge of everything. No, you can scarcely write to me, for I travel much, and your letter might not reach me before we meet again. Till then God bless and keep you.’

They stood at the foot of King William’s statue by this time, and with another fervent clasp of the hand parted, Pawley going down Cannon Street and his friend towards Gracechurch Street.

Chapter XXII - Foxleigh’s Double

‘When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,’ So the Psalmist sings of the effect on the emancipation of Israel from the yoke of Babylon, and Pawley was in a similar condition as he threaded his way through the hurrying throng of Cannon Street. The animal part of him was in the very heart of London, making its automatic way towards Fleet Street and the Strand, but the soul - the mind was far away rejoicing as a bird whose cage bars had been providentially broken, giving again to it the freedom of life and hope. He was resting in the immediate wake of a miracle, and his overstrained nerves were numbed in the collapse of the abnormal tension they had sustained. Half an hour previously he was battling helplessly, hopelessly in one of the eddies and undercurrents abounding in the rapids of the stream of life; its maelstrom had already caught him, and the roar of the vortex was ringing in his ears. In the agony of his despair, his mind reverted to the loved ones, who must follow and share in his destruction, since he was powerless to save them, and the anguish of his impotence redoubled his own torture. The cold, sick, resistless hand of death was upon him, suffering had touched its high-water mark, and he was gradually sinking into the arms of oblivion, when a hand reached out and grasped him, lifting him from the jaws of death to a rock of deliverance,

where he knew he was safe under the protection of One mighty to save. He walked on and on, conscious only that he had been delivered and was resting. He was capable of nothing beyond. In fact, he was unable even in after years to recall any other memory of those moments but the one clear impression made upon his mind - 'It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

Be it so, Pawley! Rest there and you will be safe. They that have clean hands and pure hearts shall ascend to the hill of the Lord and unto the city of the living God, which is but one step removed from Calvary. The corridor of sacrificial faith looms dark, and is full of terrors; many are called to pass therethrough but few are found to be worthy, few have courage to go forward, assured that through the vestibule of death is the divinely-appointed way to the halls of life - 'to the heavenly Jerusalem, and the innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly of the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' Lift up your head, brave heretic, and go forward, fearing not what man shall do unto you, for 'the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear Him, and (what is more) delivereth them.' Take courage, be not afraid, though a thousand fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, 'even thy hairs are numbered, and the eye that keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.' In the darkness grip the guiding hand and it will lead you by a way you know not - but He knows. Be not afraid and He will bring you from the furnace as gold well refined with the hall-mark of the lost Christianity impressed upon it.

Without being conscious of it, he had evidently travelled down Queen Victoria Street and presently found himself walking along the Thames side of the embankment on his way to the office where it was necessary he should see Harleston at once. No, not at once; there were more reasons than one why he should first make Gradeley acquainted with what had taken place. The sub-editor had introduced him to Harleston, and however Utopian and unpractical he might be in business, he was still a gentleman, and would certainly resent the conduct meted out to his confrere. Further, the experience of Pawley might serve as a timely warning to the other, and place him upon his guard against similar possibilities of treachery.

The sub-editor listened to the almost incredible story with alternate doubts as to whether he heard aright, and the sanity of the speaker. Pawley had never seen him so moved to indignation before, and perhaps it was well for all concerned that Harleston had not yet arrived and Gradeley's feelings had time to cool somewhat. Then he was able to speak more reasonably and opened his mind to his friend as to doubts and questions which had secretly troubled him. In his own way he had scratched Harleston's veneer and been sorrowfully forced to the conclusion that his imagined literary cavalier was nothing but a highwayman prowling around the region of belles-lettres, capable and ready to do anything for his own protection and aggrandisement, but without thought or feeling for another. Like Pawley, however,

Gradeley had kept his discovery to himself as far as possible, only speaking to each other as necessity demanded, and then with a reserve which would have been more honoured in its breach; but now that a bolt had fallen so disastrously between them, they fully compared notes, though Pawley was convinced in the end that Gradeley would have courage only to advise. Whatever had to be done would be single-handed.

If it is true that the biographies of great men are always brief, can it be equally said that all men with brief biographies are great men? If so, Harleston would take premier rank among the leaders of this greatest of all nations. The true story of his career may be written thus, and leave nothing advisable unsaid: The penniless son of an Irish pedagogue, he was launched upon the world, possessing a fund of native humour and a determination to collect such information as might be turned to pecuniary account. From the recital of his stories he advanced to writing them, and to secure publication gave them an occasional pathetic or religious turn; the rest is divided between fortune and audacity. Of course the fiction of his career as embellished and illustrated by himself was a very different affair - quite an artistic miracle. Still, as we are speaking historically just now, we must deny ourselves the pleasure and assistance of the arts and sciences to which the romancers are heartily welcome.

The only point of interest it is necessary for us to call attention to is the fact that Harleston was a consistent member of the Foxleigh brigade, whose success in life is entirely due to the cunning and hypocritical exploiting of religion for all it is worth. We have chosen to portray the two representatives, one in his sacred and the other in his secular pursuits, but from each to the other may be traced in the undercurrent the implacable hatred and insatiable thirst for revenge which marks the absence of everything truly religious, and relegates the two men to the level of such as are loathsome and contemptible to every honest mind. The difference between them is merely that of temperament, not aim or principle, and if the whole brigade be carefully inspected they will only vary in this respect - they are wolves among the sheep, and the cloaks they wear are sadly inefficient to hide their true identity except from those who will not see. It is in this contamination that the weakness of the Church is to be found; here lies the charge of her infidelity; here is her laughing-stock and discomfiture, her shame and disgrace. Again may it be said, as the silver-tongued Isaiah bewailed, 'How is the faithful city become a harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water; thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come unto them.' If God pronounced judgment on that ancient Church which at the best only groped its way forward amidst the types and shadows of the yet unbroken day, what will He do with us who stand in the full glory and hear the reverberations rolling through nineteen centuries of Him who cried, And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven shalt be

brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day?’

But ours is not to speculate, only to indicate and record what is, and pass along.

When Pawley left Gradeley he went at once to his chief, who had by that time arrived.

‘My dear Pawley, I think the gods must favour me by sending you to me at such a time,’ cried the old man.

‘Of all men you are the one I most desire to see at this moment. Come in! Take a seat and give me the benefit of your valuable counsel, for I am in a perfect quandary of bewilderment.’

But Pawley was in no humour for circumlocution or evasiveness at such a moment, especially since he well understood the loquacious affability to be nothing but an attempt to parry the thrust Harleston only too well knew he had to meet. Events had gradually drawn them into closer contact, and in the approach the real character of Harleston had been more and more clearly revealed until at last nothing but unrelieved contempt remained for one who once had been honoured, almost worshipped as an idol. Entertaining such feelings and with a sense of the injury he had sustained lashing his nerves into an uncontrollable fury, Pawley had much difficulty in making even a show of courtesy to the man with whom he had to reckon.

‘Excuse me, Mr. Harleston,’ he replied with quiet repression, in which the unusual hardness of his voice told of the excitement with which he struggled, I have a personal matter I wish to speak about, and that must take precedence of all other subjects this morning.’

Harleston was cornered. The set determination he saw in Pawley’s eyes told him that all was known and escape was useless, unless by a sudden rush he could effect his purpose, and though it was a difficult feat to attempt, he was of all men the last to submit to defiance with equanimity.

‘And who are you, sir, who dare say “must” to me?’

‘I will tell you who I am, and why you will have to hear me,’ he answered, advancing and taking up a position at the table which Harleston had been cautious to keep between them. Then Pawley, without affording the other opportunity of objection, launched into the story of his complaint against the treachery with which his services had been rewarded. It was a painful ordeal for him to plead his own cause, but the circumstances were even more so, and behind him stood his wife and children, who had only been saved from a fatal disaster by a significant interposition of Providence. This gave emphasis to his argument and a fervid eloquence to his tongue, such as speedily appealed to the admiration and appreciation of Harleston’s Irish nature, and without a thought that he was the subject of the charges, declamations and appeals, which meant so much to the speaker, he listened with unalloyed

pleasure to the feast of rhetoric which had been so unexpectedly provided for his delectation.

Had he not passed without the pale of compunction, that appeal would have reached him and compelled him to play the man and redeem himself; but neither in the honied smile nor the alertness of the tickled ear was there the slightest indication that the point of remorse had been discovered, or that the subject of complaint had the most remote reference to himself. Never was a man more honestly, yet respectfully, dealt with, or more generously appealed to for the sake of himself in the future than the speaker pleaded with him. The scene, robbed of the painfully dramatic incident which called it forth, was humorously grotesque in the comedy it presented, reversing as it did every recognised tradition of counsel. The prophet, philosopher and sage was a young man standing upon the threshold of life, with all its experiences and possibilities lying before him; and still he argued with, advised and cautioned, the white-haired prodigal whose tottering feet were nervously feeling for the staircase to the tomb, even while he laughed and gloated over the thought of joys he still contemplated.

‘By all the saints in the calendar, Pawley,’ he cried in unaffected admiration, when at length the other paused, ‘you are a wonderful man - a truly wonderful man! I have sat in the gallery of the House and listened to the most eloquent men of the century; but you surpass them all, sir, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your more than magnificent oration.’

‘Mr. Harleston -’

‘Be quiet, sir. I will allow no interruption until I have fittingly congratulated you upon your unprecedented brilliancy of speech. How proud I am in my humble way to be associated with the possessor of such powers words fail me to say, and my only regret is that I have had no part or share in the events which have called it forth.’

‘No -’

‘Mr. Pawley, I must insist that you hear me! I am an older man and have seen more of the world than you have, and I tell you, sir, that you have fortune awaiting you on the stage, if you will only condescend to accept it; there is distinction at the Bar, renown in the House; or, if you prefer it, there is fame in the pulpit, without the thought of a rival. Literature and the pen are too slow for you with such a gift; I shall write down this day in my journal with red ink, and never cease to thank you for the pleasure you have afforded me.’

Pawley was desperate; but what could he do? The one was as determined to escape as the other was to capture him, and each fought with his favourite weapon in the encounter. After the two attempts Harleston had beaten down, he grounded his arms and waited until the inevitable pause should come; then he was ready - perhaps stronger for the rest he had taken.

‘And is it with such gibes you propose to mock me in my trouble? Is this the way

you apologise for your treachery when discovered? Is this the reparation you propose to make for your foul conspiracy? If so let me tell you that your course is a dangerous one, for men who stand in my position are in no mood for jesting.'

'My poor Pawley,' he replied in mock commiseration, 'I am sorry you should have to grieve over one of your gods fallen.'

'No god has fallen - it is rather a devil that has arisen' he exclaimed, and then, repentant for the use of the unguarded epithet, he added at once, 'But, Mr. Harleston, I would save you even now if I could.'

He was quick as a lightning flash to seize the slightest advantage.

'You save me, sir! And who the devil are you to lend assistance to Michael Harleston?'

'At the least I am an honest -'

'And I, sir! What am I, sir?' he returned.

'I hope the sequel will prove you to be the same. Yes, from the bottom of my heart I wish it, sir.'

'By the gods,' he roared, 'I have a reputation as well established as your insolence! Go! Leave me! Begone!' And he dramatically pointed his visitor out.

'I am quite willing to go, but before I do so we must come to some settlement.'

'There is no settlement, sir! Begone! Leave me!' 'I have a claim against you, and that must be met in one way or another.'

'By the great gods, man, do you threaten me?'

'No, and I should be sorry to be compelled to take any steps for the recovery of what is due to me; but you have assisted in bringing about a crisis in which I am unable to help myself. I simply demand that you pay me what is due in order that I may extricate myself.'

'And if I refuse?'

'Then I shall be reluctantly compelled to take other steps.'

'So you do threaten me. Yes, sir; and as you speak I see madness flaming in your eyes! I must have help, for I am an old man and no match for you in strength! Gradeley!' he cried, ringing his bell furiously. 'Gradeley, come and help me!'

The sub-editor heard the summons, but, being perfectly willing rather to forego his own claim than be drawn into the unpleasant business, paid no attention thereto until it was vigorously repeated.

'Gradeley! My dear friend, Gradeley,' cried the old man, come to my assistance or I shall be killed.'

'Really, Mr. Harleston,' he replied, looking irritably over the top of his glasses, is

this a joke? If so, I am very busy and must beg to be excused.'

'No, no, Gradeley; it is no comedy, but unless you protect me it will be a tragedy.'

'He seeks protection from himself,' Pawley explained with a surprising calmness in contrast to his chief. 'If you can save him it will be well for all of us.'

There was no way for Gradeley's escape now, and for a man of his disposition, with a very strong prejudice in favour of riding a fence in all such crises, his situation was not a pleasant one.

'I am very sorry,' he stammered; of course I cannot plead ignorance of the subject of your dispute. But really it is one in which I have no right to interfere, and I must ask you to allow me to withdraw.'

'But I demand your protection from the hands of this ruffian.'

Again Gradeley peered over his glasses at the editor this time with very ill-concealed disgust.

'I think you are a little excited, Mr. Harleston,' he replied. 'I am sure you have no more to fear from Mr. Pawley than he has to fear from you.'

'You are as bad as he, sir! No, you shall not leave me! You are a brace of conspirators,' and he rushed to close and try to lock the door, but the key was lost. 'My God, and has it come to this that I am to end my life at the hands of a pair of cut-throats, without assistance? No! I will have help; I will call the police and throw myself into the arms of the law.'

This time he rushed for the window, and though Pawley was quite prepared to allow matters to take their course, Gradeley was seriously put out at the idea of a scene, and forcibly restraining Harleston, appealed to him to be reasonable.

'Then drive him away,' he cried, turning ferociously upon Pawley. 'You have no claim on me, I say! Go! Leave the place at once, or by the gods you will be in prison before you reach the door.'

He could do nothing with the chief in such a state of mind, so he took his hat.

'Yes, I will go; but you must blame yourself for the steps you compel me to take.'

With that he walked out of the office, and his connection with the *Register* ceased.

Chapter XXIII – A Daring Move

Life's fitful fever had surely reached a delirious stage in Pawley's experience that day. The guiding hand of Providence might truly be leading him, but the road was thorny and the elements were black and fearful round about. It is no use to say that he was not unshaken. He was but a man whose feet stood upon the earth, and when the macrocosm quaked and trembled the microcosm had no alternative but to respond in sympathy. It is nonsense, and betrays our ignorance of the wisdom of God, to contend that He expects us to stand unmoved when the world beneath our feet is shattered – 'He knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are but dust.' If He sees a willing spirit, rest assured He will not unjustly regard the natural trembling of the flesh.

The rush of events had been too much for the fasting Pawley, and it is not surprising that the effect of the cool air caused his brain to whirl and a sensation of faintness to pass over him as he regained the street. Even his next step was now enveloped in Egyptian blackness - closed as his way had never been blocked before. No light, no voice, no knowledge. Where should he go - what should he do? If he could only reach again his unknown friend of an hour ago! He seized the iron railing in front of the office to steady himself.

'Aren't you well, Mr. Pawley? Can I do anything for you?'

It was Cox the porter who thus accosted him. He had been to the printers and consequently knew nothing of what had transpired.

'I don't feel quite up to the mark this morning,' replied Ernest, making a desperate effort to pull himself together. 'I am going home and hope to be better tomorrow.'

'Shall I call a cab?'

'No, thank you; I will walk as far as Westminster Bridge and take the tram.'

'But you can't walk to Westminster as you are, sir. Please let me call a cab?'

'No, thank you, Cox. I have no need to hurry and the walk will do me good.' Then, loathing even the paltry deception he imagined he was practising upon the over-anxious fellow, he added, with a faint attempt at a smile, 'Besides, I cannot afford cabs now.'

'Go on, Mr. Pawley; you're always joking,' responded his admirer, brightening up under the influence of the imagined pleasantries.

'I am not joking now,' he answered seriously. 'I think my cab days are over - at least for the present.'

Cox gave his hat a peculiar jerk to the back of his head opened his eyes and stared at Pawley in inquiring amazement.

'What's up, sir? Nothing wrong, is there?'

'I can't say there is anything wrong, Cox, and yet there may be; but you will have to get on without me for the future in the office.'

'No, sir; don't say you have left, sir.'

'Yes! I have done with the *Register*. But I hope you will be all right.'

'It can't be all right wi'out you. But don't bother about that now, you aren't well. Do let me call a cab for you.'

Void of all artifice and unskilled in the formalities of refinement, he honestly allowed full scope to the concern he felt for the one man who had reached out a helping hand to save him, and the consciousness of his appreciation was a sweet solace to Pawley in his trouble.

'No, Cox, it is not necessary, thank you. I can easily walk to Westminster, if I take my time. I shall see you again shortly. Good morning.'

'Good morning, and God bless you, sir.'

Pawley walked away with an unsteady step, Cox standing doubtful whether to offer to go with him as far as the Bridge; but at last he appeared to abandon the idea and turned towards the office, muttering, -

'Something's gone wrong somewhere; but the man that's done anything to him ought to have the stuffin' kicked out of him. That's certain to start with.'

Pawley went home, where he was sure to find sympathy, much needed rest and counsel while he waited and watched for the sign of the pillar of fire leading him through the blackness which was not only felt but pressed so heavily upon him.

'Thank God you have come so soon,' cried Elinor, as she embraced him without a thought that his early return might presage other misfortune. 'I don't think I could have lived through the uncertainty till night.'

Then he told her all the experiences of the morning from which her faith took hold of the interposition of the Unknown, and in its light and consolation she gave but little, perhaps too little, attention to the interview with Harleston.

'He shall cover thee with His feathers,' she murmured, as her husband finished. 'Ernest, we need not fear in the protection of such a presence.'

'No, dear; now I am at home with you I feel perfectly confident about it. I don't know who my deliverer was, but whether mortal or immortal, he was none other than the angel of the Lord to me in that hour.'

'Under His wings shalt thou trust,' she continued the quotation of her text for the day, as it occurred to her that Ernest as yet had not had his breakfast, and began to busy herself in its preparation. 'With a canopy like that above our heads, my lad, why need we fear the shadows?' Then her brightening thoughts took voice and she sang, as she laid the table: -

“Through waves and clouds and storms

He gently cleares our way;

Wait thou His time, so shall the night

Soon end in joyous day.” ‘

‘I shall have to see a solicitor in the morning and let him proceed against Harleston at once,’ he said presently.

‘That is very clearly your duty,’ she replied. ‘God helps those who help themselves, and if we are neglectful we shall lose our claim on Him.’

It is not often however that solicitors see cases in the same light as their clients, and Pawley’s proved to be no exception to the ordinary rule. Gerhard sent him to a practitioner in whom he had full confidence, who, so far as the case itself was concerned, was assured of its justice and simplicity. But Harleston was a man of position and influence, who would be sure to contest the claim, demanding that a competent advocate should be secured in the first instance to prevent any possible defeat. In order to do this it would be necessary for Pawley to give him ten pounds on account before he could proceed.

His client was dumbfounded at the request. Less than the required ten pounds would have prevented all the difficulty; it was evident, therefore, that emancipation was not to come that way.

The blackness was still closing around him. Hope only flashed before his eyes just to die away on the instant and leave the gloom even more profound. The future was now appreciably worse than ever, but there was no turning back even had he the will to do so. He must needs go forward, come what would.

Bruised afresh with his new disappointment, he became doubly aware of the necessity of securing some other employment, and his thoughts at once turned towards the promise he had given to Mr. Severn. The proposed London office had been opened in Fleet Street and he determined to call at once and ascertain who was in charge. He found a young man, Alphonse Ritter, scarcely more than a youth, who, it afterwards transpired, had been sent from Cottominster to temporarily hold the position until Pawley should be at liberty to take it, Severn being convinced that such an arrangement would take place. But Ritter had another idea, and, though he knew Pawley and Mr. Severn’s mind about him, did not relish the thought of vacating in his favour, with the result that our friend ultimately entered into an arrangement to canvass for his old journal as the deputy of, and share commissions with, Ritter until such time as he could find more remunerative employment.

Thus it was that Pawley came into the selfsame condition in which he first found Cox, and in his own experience learned the difficulties of a man - however honest - seeking for employment in London without a satisfactory reference. It was no fault

of his own, but to whom could he refer? Not Harleston! Mr. Severn - to do so would be to displace Ritter, and that he would scorn to do, come what might. Neither could he mention the minister or deacons of his church, even though they might be acceptable. Everywhere he had to face the same inquiries - 'Where were you last?' and 'Why did you leave?'

Added to this, Foxleigh was not yet satisfied with what had so far been accomplished. The Unknown had certainly exerted a restless, restraining influence on Blake - it was a curb he would gladly take between his teeth, but he feared to do so, though Foxleigh was ever using all his powers to persuade him thereto, being assured that the threats were nothing more than empty boasting, and the regarding of them gave Pawley countenance in defiantly continuing the meetings. Certainly the incident of the broker's man had been freely circulated on the Common, or rather such a version of it as would injure the preacher without reflecting on the usurious deacon or his church, and had been beneficial in estranging the support of not a few of Pawley's former admirers. But the grand climax of the scheme had failed; the man with an independent spirit, who refused to chain his mind to the chariot wheel of the arbitrary quack, had still a home, and the thought of it embittered the life of Samuel Foxleigh.

Two weeks of unsuccessful tramping the streets of London in search of employment had passed wearily by, during which Pawley had only been able to provide for his wife and children by frequent visits to his friend Gerhard. Then a ray of fortune broke through the clouds and he was able to hand to Ritter an advertisement upon which his share of the commission would slightly exceed three pounds, and he hurried home to report that the low-water mark of their misfortune had been reached and the flowing tide was setting in.

But news was also awaiting him. For some days Elinor had been in more delicate health than she confessed, and at length prematurely succumbed and gave birth to a fourth son.

The crisis had been over some hours when he arrived, and Elinor was comfortably sleeping, watched over by a neighbour who was a regular nurse and also a member of Mount Pisgah Church.

Mrs. Catlin made her official announcement, and then expressed her dignified surprise at the empty condition of the larder, very carefully enumerating the necessities she required forthwith, not to speak of such little considerations as she had a right to expect personally.

Here was an unexpected hardship for Pawley, for he dare not make an honest explanation of his condition to the 'dear Christian soul,' lest in her charity she should at once leave his wife to look after herself. He expressed no surprise, but rather attempted to put on a cheery look, and stealthily appropriating his wife's watch went to purchase the necessities.

The lynx eyes of the nurse saw him take the watch, however, and before tea was ready she found occasion to make him aware of it.

‘Mr. Pawley, I wish to let you know that if I am to continue to nurse your wife,’ she said to him two days later at the foot of the stairs on his return home, I must request that I may be treated in accordance with the dignity of my profession.’

‘What is your complaint?’ asked the astonished man. If I have done anything it has been through ignorance rather than intent.’

‘It is not what you have done but what you have not done that I complain of. I would not treat a dog as you are treating your wife! Leaving her in the state she is without necessary food to recover her strength, and half the day - and a day like this above all others - we have neither had coal nor fire.’

‘I understood that you had everything in the house before I went away.’

‘But if you had been a gentleman, you would have left me a few shillings in case of necessity,’ she replied with ironic dignity.

Poor Ernest! What could he say? He did not wish that morning to make another visit to Gerhard’s because he expected his cheque from Cottominster and intended to return early, but circumstances had been against him. Still he had his money now, and was saved from further humiliation at the woman’s hands.

‘I am very sorry,’ he replied, but I expected to be back by noon. But as it was, you might have lent Mrs. Pawley a bucket of coal until I returned.’

‘Indeed, I should never do anything of the kind. We make it a rule neither to borrow nor lend, and it is a pretty time of day when neighbours are expected to have more consideration for a sick woman than her own husband!’

‘Ah, well! Here is five shillings. That will get coal and supply any *et ceteras* for tomorrow. I must apologise for the injustice I have done you, but when I could not get home as I anticipated I thought if any unforeseen necessity did arise, your woman’s heart, not to think of your Christian profession, would lead you to do what was wanted.’

‘Religion and nursing are like soap and sugar - best not mixed,’ she answered testily. ‘This is not the first time people have thought they could let me in because we both went to the same chapel; but it never did work and you need not attempt it again.’

‘I will promise not to wrong you a second time,’ he replied, and passed up the stairs to see his wife.

Elinor needed no explanation but that his cheque did not arrive till the afternoon, then he sat beside her bed and began to comfort her with rosy ideas he had in his mind when she grew strong again. He was sure Ritter was wanted in Cottominster and was half inclined to write to one of the clerks, by way of ascertaining how

matters actually stood, but she thought such a course would be scarcely right towards Ritter, and the idea fell through.

About nine o'clock a heavy lumbering vehicle rolled up the street and came to a halt beneath their window. Elinor, nervous and hysterical from her condition, was filled with alarm, and tearfully asked what was the matter.

'Nothing, love, nothing,' he replied reassuringly rising to see what it really was. They have sent us the remainder of our coals in a pantehnicon van, that is all.'

Then came the rap at the door, but a moment later he left the room at the sound of scuffling feet and a slight scream from the maid. Half way down the stairs he recognised Clamb forcing his way past the resisting girl.

'What's this?' he demanded, as he thrust the broker back. You have made a mistake this time,' and he attempted to close the door, but two stalwart men prevented him.

'It's all right, mi old 'igh fallutin',' cried the broker, as soon as he recovered his breath.

'But it's not all right,' he answered, seizing the foremost of the two men who were pressing upon him. Despair gave him both strength and courage so that he hurled the fellow back, measuring his full length upon the floor.

'That's yer little game, is it?' cried Clamb, who had retired to a safe distance where he had the protection of the iron railings beyond the little forecourt. Just try to do that agen, my little chicken, an' yer'll be safe in the arms of the obby, sharp! We've got yer own permission to come, and 'ere we is, for yer sticks and rags, and we're goin' to 'ave 'em, unless - ' and then he paused without finishing the sentence.

It scarcely needed these words to apprise Pawley of the situation. In spite of the unwilling undertaking Lucas had given, Foxleigh had finally prevailed upon Blake to carry his plan to the bitter extremity, and opposed as Pawley was by such superior numbers, even a more miraculous interference than he had yet experienced was necessary to frustrate the proposition.

'Unless what?' he asked with a despairing inquiry almost sufficient to touch a heart of adamant. Do you know the condition of my wife and that this outrage may be fatal to her?'

'Oh, yer needn't tell us, we know all about it, and ha' come to do our bit while the little devil's safe a-bed. So yer see yer ain't a-goin' ter nick us this time, mi pretty artful. Our orders is ter take the lot at once, unless, as I says - ' and again he paused.

'Unless what?'

'Well, as I understan's it, it's something like this - if yer can't pay the money, I'm to take the lot unless yer passon says don't.'

'But Mr. Blake knows Mr. Pinchbeck would say "Don't" under these

circumstances.'

'What Blake knows an' what he doesn't know is neither 'ere nor there. I don't know it, an' wi'out his word to me off I carts the lot at once.'

'Will you wait while I go for him?'

'I'll gi' yer a quarter of a hour, but no longer.'

'And you won't touch anything while I am gone?'

'Not unless you are longer than that.'

'I won't be ten minutes,' and without a thought of anything but his deliverance he seized his hat and rushed to Pinchbeck's house, only three minutes' walk from his own.

Pinchbeck was just collecting his family for evening prayer when the bell rang, and very unwillingly consented to see his unfortunate visitor. He listened with his usual placid smile to the story of needed assistance so passionately poured forth, and then quietly answered, 'It is a very great responsibility you ask me to assume, and I am not sure I know you well enough to warrant me in doing it; but I will see Mr. Blake in the morning and do what may be possible.'

'But they are taking my goods to-night, and you know what effect such a shock may have upon my wife. You know me well enough to allow me to preach for you on the Common. Is this I ask a greater responsibility than that?'

'We will not argue that point now,' he replied with his sanctimonious smile. I am sorry for you and will pray for God to bring you through it in safety, but you have my decision.' Then he opened the door and bowed Pawley out.

The thought of Gerhard flashed through his mind as the door closed behind the distracted man, and with the fleetness of a hunted hart he was at the pawnbroker's.

Alas for hope! Gerhard had gone to the theatre. There was none to help.

He was back home in less than the time specified, but with his departure - which was only a designed ruse - the men instantly started upon their hellish task, and the two rooms were in a most dismantled state when he returned.

He was too exhausted and bewildered for further opposition, and when Clamb laughed merrily at the trick he had played, Pawley threw himself upon the stairs and watched the movements of the men like one in a dream.

'What next, boss?' asked one of the men when they had cleared both rooms.

'Is everythin' out o' here?'

'Everythin'.'

'Then clear the kitchen next.'

At this Ernest started to his feet and blocked the way.

‘Are you not satisfied,’ he cried, ‘when you have already ten times the value of what I owe?’

‘All right, my topsy-wopsy,’ replied Clamb; sit down agen an’ rest yourself. ‘We can do what’s got to be done wi’out yer help. It ain’t of’en we gits it quite so nice and fat, and when we does we ain’t such Johnnies as to leave it ‘alf behind us. Inter the kitchen, lads!’

They moved, and Ernest rushed back, seizing the heavy kitchen poker, then threw himself into the doorway, brandishing the weapon above his head.

‘I’ll dash the drains from the first man who tries to pass me,’ he cried, and in the fury which swayed him he would no doubt have gone a long way towards carrying out his threat, but the men hung back.

‘All right, boys, clear the bedrooms then!’

Pawley took a leap and was over the balustrade in an instant, the poker still in his hand.

‘My wife and children are here,’ he cried. ‘Stand back, for I am mad, and more than a match for double your number.’

‘Inter the kitchen, lads; it’s all clear now,’ said Clamb; I thought I could double on the greenhorn. Oh, my Lawd, what a circus we’re a-’aving to be sure; I wouldn’t ‘a missed it for a fiver! Out wi’ the lot now, quick!’

It was impossible to guard both bedrooms and kitchen, but no sooner were the men manoeuvring to get the table through the door than he wondered how they could possibly get along without the culinary utensils and the other necessities the kitchen contained. Surely the most avaricious Jew ought to be satisfied with what had already been taken. Again he stood in the doorway, blocking the exit of the men.

‘For God’s sake, man,’ he pleaded with the broker, ‘have some pity on me and leave these.’

‘Not a leave,’ cried Clamb; ‘out with ‘em, lads!’ ‘I will buy them from you, then,’ he offered, remembering the money he had in his pocket.

‘All right,’ consented the broker. ‘Wait a minnit ‘ere, we’ve got a purchaser. Now then, mi ole Jew, what’s yer offer? But if yer’s got a gold mine about yer, why don’t yer pay yer debts and not put us ter this trouble?’

‘What do you ask to leave this place as it is?’

‘That’s not the condition o’ this sale, my pretty cabbage; what’s yer offer?’

He took the money from his pocket and spread it upon the table.

‘That is all I have in the world,’ he said.

Clamb counted it as he picked it up. ‘Fifty-four bob an’ a tanner! That ain’t a bit o’ good. It won’t find beer money for the men,’ putting it into his pocket. Go on wi’ yer

work lads!

Pawley was beside himself, but he could do nothing. The men were again struggling to get the table through the door when several of the neighbours, who had been attracted, came forward and entered a threatening protest against what was being done. London neighbours do not err as a rule on the side of sympathy, but humanity has its limit of toleration, and the proceedings that night had outraged that limit most seriously. Pawley's case and condition was not unknown, thanks to Foxleigh, and Gerhard had also had something to say about it on the other side. Neither was Mrs. Pawley's condition a secret, and the rising temper of the new arrivals speedily convinced Clamb that discretion was the better part of valour. He had not made a bad night's work and was glad to get away without further molestation. So Pawley at last was saved from the complete wreckage of his home such as had been determined.

With the age of years written on his face in that awful hour he closed the door and went back to his wife.

She had heard the commotion, but had been left to divine its cause. The nurse went down to ascertain this at the moment Pawley left to see Pinchbeck, and the girl, following Mrs. Catlin's example, had gone home. Elinor had been alone!

'Oh, my lad, my lad!' she cried as soon as she beheld him, 'are you safe?'

He did not - could not - speak, but fell helpless beside her, and they wept in each other's arms. Then he thought of her and calmed himself.

The worst has not happened, darling, so long as you are left. We may replace our home, but you . . . and again he broke down.

Those who know God best are conscious that there are times when His righteousness compels Him to intervene in the extremities of His people. Under the shadow of such an intervention Elinor rested that night. The excitement through which she passed at such a critical period was morally certain to prove fatal but for that saving Presence. But He covered the sufferers with His feathers, and under His wings they trusted and were safe.

Chapter XXIV - Cast Down, But Not Forsaken

In the presence of such a catastrophe as that recorded in the last chapter an anaemic faith is apt to falter, and timid souls find full justification for all kinds of doubt. Where was the Unknown? Had he not bound himself to see the claim settled? Why did he interfere at all if he was not prepared to avert such an extremity? His action only raised false hopes and made the trouble greater! He was not the man he represented himself to be, for if God had sent him to relieve the lesser tension He would also bid him return to save from the more dire disaster! Others will find a satisfactory explanation for all that occurred in Pawley's self-righteousness, which

has been almost blasphemously apparent from the beginning. They have known all along, if the story was being written by an honest and truthful pen, that the cloven foot would appear, and their eyes have carefully watched for the sign thereof. Such pharisees as he, going about to malign the saints of God, and trying to pull down noble pillars of the Church, always come to an untimely end. It is only what you might expect that the judgment of God should fall upon them! There are still others who will smile complacently at the accurate forecast their knowledge of common-sense workings out enabled them to make. Pawley is not quite such a fanatical fool as most religionists, but he has not broken as completely from the leading-strings of the Church as he imagines when he still believes that God - if He really does exist - ever interests himself in the trifles of humanity or interferes with the usual trend of events. He is making progress, and a little more experience will convince him that Nature takes its own unintelligent course without discrimination between the good and the bad.

There is still a fourth aspect from which we may regard this incident and profitably ask a few questions. What if the way is still ordered by the Lord and we have not yet reached the end of it? The Unknown promised to see the debt discharged when it became due, but only on condition of Blake keeping the contract - there was a mysterious hint at consequences if the compact was broken. The loyal child of God has no guarantee of immunity from persecution or suffering at the hands of evil-doers, rather has the Master left His followers the timely caution, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but fear not, I have overcome the world.' The glorious reward so graciously hidden in this assurance can only evolve from the tribulation. It is always in the afterwards of suffering that the fuller glory of the Lord is revealed. No man can paint the noonday beauties whose soul grew fearful at the daybreak shadows. Even the Christ could not reach the resurrection triumph until He had first passed Gethsemane and Calvary. Miss Havergal in one of her sweet songs gives us a caution in this respect we would do well to ponder: -

How shall we gauge the whole, who can only guess a part?

How can we read the life, when we cannot spell the heart?

How shall we measure another, we who can only know

From the juttings above the surface the depth of the vein below?

For the swift is not the safe, and the sweet is not the strong;

The smooth is not the short, and the keen is not the long;

The much is not the most, and the wide is not the deep,

And the flow is never a spring, when the ebb is only neap.'

Pawley has not yet reached the end of his pilgrimage; let us follow him and

suspend our judgment.

It was on the stroke of midnight before Ernest aroused himself to the thought that his wife stood sorely in need of some refreshment, and then for the first time he wondered at the absence of the nurse.

'I suppose Mrs. Catlin has gone,' he said, but surely she intends to come back and make you comfortable for the night.'

'I hope not,' Elinor answered wearily; 'I could not bear to have her with me again tonight.'

'Very well, darling; you shall not see her even if she does come back,' assuming a cheerfulness intended to encourage her as much as possible. 'But you must have something to eat.'

Elinor shook her head.

'Don't trouble about that my lad; I only want to be left alone.'

'And you shall be left alone while I go down and see what I can find for you.'

'I am not hungry, dear.'

'That's fortunate just now,' he replied, but by the time I have found what there is and prepared it you will be ready to eat something.'

It was not the first time Ernest had taken a hand in simple culinary operations and he felt himself quite competent to prepare a little gruel such as was permissible for his wife at that time. So without more argument he left her to discover what fortune awaited him.

His first work was to replenish the almost extinguished fire, then in the larder he found a small quantity of bacon, jam, and the best part of a loaf of bread, the latter of which he placed upon the table. In the store cupboard he discovered sufficient oatmeal for his purpose and also milk.

'Come now, we are proceeding famously,' he said, talking for his own encouragement. 'I wonder whether there is any - ah! there is the butter dish, and just as much butter as I want. Now if I can only find some ginger; but I suppose I shall have to go through fifty boxes before I find it in the last. No! what's this? It smells like ground ginger.' Then he tasted it to make sure. Good! Fortune always favours the brave. Now let me see - what else do I want?' And he turned on the chair to enumerate what he had already placed upon the table. Oatmeal, butter, salt, milk, ginger. We have no eggs, and if we had, it would perhaps not be wise to include it. Now what more do I want - something, I am sure! Ginger, milk, salt, butter, oatmeal - there's something short, but my head is more like a turnip - oh, I know - sugar! Elinor would rather have her gruel without oatmeal than sugar. But there is not a bit in the basin. Where is the bag or store jar, I wonder?' But he could find none. I know,' he cried, 'there is some in the silver' - and he jumped from the chair and

started towards the dismantled rooms before he recalled himself. Then he paused dejectedly. I must have some from somewhere; she can have nothing but gruel, and cannot eat that without sugar, so sugar I must have!

But there was nothing so certain as the fact that there was none in the house.

He was now at his wit's end! Were his efforts to be frustrated in an absolute necessity for the sake of a spoonful of sugar? He made another attack upon the cupboard. 'It's no use despairing until the last certainty is ascertained,' he persuaded himself hopefully; 'you never can say what has happened, and it would puzzle a prophet to say what may be. Perhaps the girl may have used one of these jars as a sugar basin at some time, and left - Hello! What's this? Golden syrup! Thank God! that will do!' and he jumped from the chair almost as lighthearted as if he had never known trouble.

The gruel was carefully made, the toast just ruddily browned, and the syrup was sufficient to sweeten without discolouring. Then he strained it, and by the addition of milk thinned it down to the consistency of cream, as his wife preferred it; and while Elinor ate he recounted the adventures and difficulties of its manufacture.

He had a trying task before him in the morning. He was early astir so as to do what was necessary in the absence of the girl, but Elinor quietly slept the sleep of exhaustion, for which he was more than devoutly thankful. But presently the children were awake, and their little tongues, he was afraid, would naturally have a thousand questions to ask. He locked the doors of the empty rooms, and roused the merriment of the little ones by his clumsiness in washing and dressing them, which he explained he had to do because Lizzie had gone home, mamma was ill, and Mrs. Catlin had not come yet; and fortunately that proved so far satisfactory.

Then came the question of breakfast. How was he to solve it? The cry of the milkman at that moment relieved him. He had the door open before the man had turned away.

'Can we have an extra quart?' he asked, without a thought of how the man would be paid on the following Monday.

'Yessir.'

So the children had bread and milk, and Elinor had milk and bread for breakfast. Ernest did not feel like eating - there was none for him.

Having an early appointment in the city, and being compelled to walk, he was obliged to leave home before Mrs. Catlin's arrival, so he installed the children as nurses to take care of mamma and baby until Mrs. Catlin or Lizzie should come.

Then promising to be home as soon as possible he bade his wife keep up a good heart, since there was nothing more to fear, and not let anyone worry her till he returned.

He had taken his kiss and left the room, but instantly returned, having found a

stray sixpence in the corner of his pocket - evidently left from the money he had given Clamb, and this, with the balance Mrs. Catlin still held, would be sufficient to struggle on with till he came home

As he left them so he found them on his return, after a disappointing and unsuccessful day, and his pockets as empty as when he set out.

The maid had called for her box, but in the fear that she would not be paid declined to stop even for a single hour. When Elinor doubted whether the nurse intended to come she had sent little Albert to make the inquiry, and received a note in reply stating that the nurse could not possibly risk her reputation by attending people who lived on borrowed money. She had her good name to consider, and therefore Mrs. Pawley must dispense with her services.

Ernest heard the explanation, but he could find no words to answer even to his wife.

Milk and bread had been left as usual, so that the children had been able to have some food, but Elinor was in a seriously exhausted condition. The sixpence still remained, and the broken-hearted man at once proceeded to get the materials for more gruel, after having eaten which, while he made her room as comfortable as possible, she narrated another experience she had encountered.

When she learned that the nurse had forsaken her, she had dared to brave the consequences, and with the assistance of her seven-year-old son, determined to wash and dress her scarcely three-days'-old baby. She had but just commenced the operation when the boy was sent to answer a soft rap at the door.

Mrs. Pinchbeck had called to see her.

'I cannot tell you how pained we were to hear of your trouble last night,' she began, coming as it did at such a critical moment, and I could not rest without assuring myself that you had not suffered from it. I do hope things are not so bad as your husband reported; and Mr. Pinchbeck wishes me to inquire what he intends to do.'

Elinor was scarcely equal to the task of entertaining her patronising visitor, who, while she talked, watched the sick woman vainly striving to accomplish her almost impossible task, and then took an unoffered seat, at the same time smilingly entreating the half-dead sufferer not to hurry or distress herself, as she could wait until the baby was dressed.

The invalid's hands dropped helplessly, her lips trembled, and her haggard eyes swam with tears of feebleness; she reeled in her weakness, and finally dropped back upon the pillows. Little Albert saw it, and rushed to his mother's side, screaming, -

'Mamma! mamma! don't die! don't die!'

Strength came with his distress, but the visitor sat still and smiled.

‘No, darling, mamma won’t die! Jesus and you will help me till papa comes.’ Then, addressing Mrs. Pinchbeck, she said, ‘Don’t you see that this is killing me? Won’t you help me?’

‘I should be very pleased to do so, but, as Mr. Pinchbeck says, we never know how far it is right to interfere with Divine interpositions. If I were certain I should not be frustrating the providences of God, I would gladly place my services at your disposal, for it grieves me more than I can express to see you suffer so. I have, however, gone as far as Mr. Pinchbeck thinks safe under the circumstances, and brought you a little barley-water and beef tea - both excellent things for persons in your condition; and my husband will call to see you to-morrow.’

Indignation and womanhood gave Elinor strength to reply to such hypocritical sophistries.

‘I have no need of your beef and barley-water, nor of Mr. Pinchbeck either. If the God you represent demands that you should trample upon the common feelings of womanhood, and stifle your humanity in His service, He will also be prepared to rejoice in my starving condition. Don’t frustrate His providences. I have no need for such a God, even in this extremity, or the charities of His ministers either. You can see how weak I am to-day, and this excitement is dangerous. Please leave me; I would rather be alone.’

Such honest speaking was too much for the official lady, who gathered her holy skirts around her, and took the beef tea, barley-water, and her departure without so much as saying ‘Good-morning’.

‘God alone has been able to bring you through what you have had to bear this last twenty-four hours,’ said Ernest, taking her tenderly in his arms as she finished her story. But surely the worst is over now, and if you can only get strong, I will try not to complain.’

‘I shall get strong again, my lad, if we have patience. God will be more merciful to us than men have been.’

‘All the evidences of the past assure us of that. We may not be able to understand Him, but

“His love in times past forbids us to think
He’ll leave us at last in trouble to sink.”

He is leading us by a way we know not, but we shall find a compensation at the end for all we suffer.’

‘God bless you for your confidence, my lad. I shall soon get st - . What’s that?’

There was a gentle rap at the front door, but in the present shattered state of her nerves every sound caused her new alarm.

‘Someone at the door,’ he replied.

'But I am so nervous, though I think it sounds almost like the coming of a friend.'

'I hope it is,' he said, as he rose to answer the summons, 'but I don't expect many friends to call upon us just now.'

He found Cox standing there when he opened the door.

'How are you, Mr. Pawley?' asked the fellow, awkwardly.

'Why, Cox, is it you? You are about the last man in the world I should have thought to find here.'

'Am I, sir?'

There was a touch of disappointment in his voice for which Pawley felt himself responsible.

'Why, of course you are,' he answered cheerily, and then the thought occurred to him that Gradeley had made an effort after he had left, and sent him some assistance. 'Have you come from the office?'

'Well, yes, sir; I have come from the office, and yet I haven't, like. That is - well, you see, do you remember that first night we met outside the Court Theatre?'

'Why, of course I do! How can I forget it? But come inside.'

'No, thank you, sir; I can't stop now. No more do I forget that night - I never shall.' Then he paused, unable to get on.

'But what has that to do with your coming here tonight?' asked Pawley.

'More'n I can tell you, a mighty lot, if I only know how to begin it.' Then, throwing all attempt at formality aside, he took his own rough way out of the difficulty. 'Look 'ere, Mr. Pawley, I was out when you was at the office this afternoon, but when I got back I heard Gradeley pitching into the chief about you, an' I learned some'at as nearly knocked me over. You have found out the truth of what I told you that night, and - and - you won't be offended with me, sir, will you? but I've come to bring you this.' As he finished he drew from his pocket and offered Pawley half a sovereign.

Ernest looked at the coin lying in the outstretched palm, but his heart was too full to speak.

'If only half what Gradeley said was true, you want it worse to-night than I did when you found me, and I took your money as if heaven had sent it. Won't you take this so from me, sir?'

'Yes, Cox, I will - I dare not do otherwise, for heaven has surely sent it, and God will bless you for bringing it.'

'He did that when He sent you to the theatre that night,' he replied, delighted that his friend accepted his offering. But I'm in a hawful hurry just now, sir. I hope Mrs. Pawley will be all right. Good-night.'

And without giving Pawley a chance for another word, he was off down the street.

So were the days of that fierce affliction passed by, strewn with occasional, mysterious, but well-timed Providences. Pawley dare not leave his wife again until she was out of danger, and situated as he was he had no alternative but to live by faith, carefully feeling his way in every step he took. It was a trial not to be coveted, a road of loneliness and sorrow leading he knew not whither, but he trusted in God that He would deliver him, and being found to stand, in the end was not disappointed. How and from whom the bare necessities came to meet their needs he was frequently at a loss to understand, but the method gave him assurance that within the enclosure of the Church there is still true wheat to be found, seed from which the bread of life is springing, ripening for the glory and uplifting of the Master, even though the rank growth of tares may hide it from our sight. Poppies and corn-flowers, poisonous and showy, may abound, making the fields to be sorrowfully gay with their destroying influences or useless gaudiness, but down below true grain will be found - food for the hungry, nourishment for unwavering faith which shall triumph in the end.

But in every night there is one moment of greater darkness; in every terror one instant of supreme agony, standing out in the afterwards unparallel and incomparable. Such a trouble Pawley was ordained to face, such a trial he had to endure in all its exquisite intensity. One morning he found he had reached the end of his resources; the purse was empty, the barrel of meal had given out, and the cruse of oil failed. As a man distraught he saw the postman pass the house when neither wife nor children had even an apology for breakfast. Milkman and baker had stopped supplies, and in all the house he could find nothing upon which he could borrow a shilling. The hours wore on and the children cried for food. Faith flickered till noon and after that fitfully started until twilight began to fall. Ernest, was almost beside himself. For full an hour neither he nor his wife had ventured to speak, and awful thoughts began to take possession of his mind. He sat beside the bed. By the force of habit his hand sought that of his wife. He touched something! Then started with the frenzied strength of a drowning man who sees a rope!

'I must have this, my love,' he cried, seizing her wedding ring; this alone can save us!'

She withdrew her hand in horror.

'No - no! my lad! Let me die rather than that.'

'Would it be right to die?' he asked with a calmness of despair strangely contrasting with the excitement of a moment ago. If so, would it not be better to die at once and end this agony?'

'Ernest, my lad my love! What do you mean?' cried the affrighted woman as she wrenched the ring from her finger and offered it to him. Take it - anything rather than such a suggestion.'

'It is the last sacrifice we can make,' he answered with a broken, husky voice. 'We

can give this, but no more. When this is gone God must do the rest, or take us.'

'God will do the rest, my lad! Don't frighten me, Ernest, but let us trust Him. Go and get some food and fire, then you will be better. God will not allow us to be tempted above that we are able to bear.'

'God help me!' he cried. 'But this one wrench has almost broken my faith!'

Three minutes later he dropped the ring into the hand of Gerhard.

'Lend me fifteen shillings on that!'

'My God! And has it come to this?'

Pawley made no answer, but seizing the money and ticket rushed from the shop like a man bereft of his senses.

The baby was a month old, and though Elinor was anything but strong, she had for some time managed to attend to her household affairs. Ernest unsuccessfully sought for employment, constantly dogged by the implacable Foxleigh, who was as determined as ever to consummate his design respecting the man who had defied him.

Pawley had just called on Ritter, hoping to receive a favourable reply to an offer which had been referred to Cottominster for a large advertisement, and was standing at the corner of Fleet Street lamenting his disappointment when a fellow canvasser accosted him.

'Pawley, can you help me out of a fix in a hurry?'

'I will if I can. What is it?'

'I have a quarter page on my front cover gone wrong just as we're going to press. Do you know a likely tip?'

'I'm not sure at the moment,' he answered, thoughtfully recalling the firms he knew. 'When must you have it?'

'I can't wait more than an hour.'

'Do you know Rose, of the Columbian Sewing Machine Company?'

'He's no good. I never got a line from him yet.' Will you let me try him? I know of no one else. 'Try him by all means, my dear fellow, if you think there is a ghost of a chance. I'll divide the coin if you do succeed.'

They jumped on a 'bus, discussing terms on the journey, and at the door of the office parted to meet again in twenty minutes.

'Why, my old friend, how are you?' exclaimed the surprised and delighted manager. 'Wherever have you been?' Then, in a tone betraying no small amount of anxiety at his appearance, 'How you are changed; I should have passed without knowing you in the street. Sit down! What has happened? Things are not going well with you.'

Rose had plenty of time to say all he wished, for words of sympathy had not been frequent of late and their expression kept Pawley quiet. But he mastered his emotion and diffidence presently and ventured on the luxury of unburdening his mind to a man in whom he had always felt confidence.

‘Poor fellow!’ replied Rose, deeply moved by the story told him. ‘But why did you not come to me? I should only have been too glad to get partially out of your debt by helping you.’

‘You are in no way in my debt, and why should I presume to attempt to cast my troubles upon your shoulders? You must have enough of your own to bear.’

‘You may be generous, Pawley, but I know my own indebtedness. I have wanted to see you, but I would not write; I prayed instead, and your coming to-day is God’s answer to it. But we will speak of that presently’ he said, rising and reaching his overcoat. Come and let us have a bit of lunch together.’

‘A gentleman is asking for Mr. Pawley,’ said one of the assistants, opening the door.

This recalled Ernest to the immediate purpose of his visit, which had so far escaped him. Rose had a personal objection against the paper, but for his friend’s sake consented to the proposition, and copy and order were at once handed to the waiting canvasser.

‘Look here, I just want you to be straight with me,’ said Rose as Pawley returned to his office. I guess you have only told me part of your story so far; now I want to know if you have breakfasted this morning?’

‘No, sir; I have not tasted food for more than twenty-four hours,’ he answered plainly.

‘My gracious man, how do you live?’

‘I am glad to be able to exist as things are,’ he replied with a sickly attempt at a smile. But I don’t trouble so much about it for myself, it’s those at - ’

‘And yet you did not come to me?’

‘I went to those who knew me better than you do, and they turned away,’ he replied sadly.

‘But there are a few still to be found in Babylon who try to follow the Master.’ And he took Pawley’s hand in a genuine expression of sympathy that needed no words in explanation.

‘No one knows that better than I do,’ he returned; ‘I have already found two such in my trouble, that I know of, but I scarcely expected they were so plentiful that I should find a third. I almost begin to think that my misfortune may be one of God’s “needs be’s,” to discover and bring together such souls, knit into union in the furnace of my affliction.’

‘Don’t begin to talk like that, or you will make me selfish and forget my first duty in listening to you. Wait a moment while I write an order, then we will have something to eat.’

He sat down and wrote, then calling a clerk he bade him execute those orders and be all ready within half-an-hour.

‘Come, Mr. Pawley; let us have some lunch.’

‘Pardon the impertinence, Mr. Rose,’ he replied, ‘but misfortune compels us - ’

‘All right, my friend; I know what you are going to say. I won’t forget them at home, but you come with me now.’

Half an hour later Pawley entered a cab in which were two large parcels of provisions and good things enumerated in Mr. Rose’s orders to his clerk, and the generous manager was instructing the well-paid Jehu to drive as quickly as possible to Dulwich.

Then Rose took Pawley’s hand in a hearty ‘God bless you,’ and as he withdrew it left a crisp five-pound note behind.

‘Take it without a word,’ he said when the wondering man was about to speak, ‘and when you have a note you don’t know what to do with, let me have it back.’

Pawley could say nothing, for the cab was off and God alone heard his words of gratitude.

Chapter XXV - Faith’s Extremity

That more than generous assistance of Mr. Rose, to which we have to add the commission received on account of his advertisement, came at a most opportune moment, and relieved Ernest of a weight of secret care which had troubled him seriously in anticipation of the Christmas festival which was now close at hand. Mr. Rose had evidently not been unmindful of the same, since the parcels were not only liberally supplied with the necessities of the household but also with a few of the luxuries for which Santa Claus is generally responsible, together with a note in the donor’s handwriting, saying that a turkey would follow on Christmas Eve.

Thus set free from present sorrow, Ernest lost no time in restoring his wife’s wedding ring, and he even went so far as to consent to redeem his own much-needed overcoat.

Regular meals and freedom from anxiety during a full week produced a wonderful effect upon Elinor; the colour began to come back to her cheeks, her eyes brightened, and on the Christmas Day she once or twice so far recovered her old self as to sing snatches of carols as she went about her duties. And in turn her chastened light-heartedness acted upon her husband so much that, though they were compelled to spend their holiday in the kitchen, it did not prove to be by any means so gloomy as

certain Christian (?) friends had intended it to be.

But with Boxing Day the rainbow vanished from their sky; the time of peace and goodwill was again over for the present, and great black clouds, portending further disaster, began to rise up angrily from the horizon.

The children had ventured that morning to renew their good morning fun and tumble with papa while he put on his coat and hat - a custom which had so far been interrupted by the arrival of the new baby - Ernest had kissed his wife, who still stood at the open door to watch his departure, when he met Mr. Case, a neighbour who represented the company from which he held his house.

'Good morning,' said Case, 'I was half afraid I had missed you. I hope it is convenient for you to let me have your rent?'

'When do you want it?' asked Pawley, somewhat surprised at the way the demand was made.

'I am sorry to say I must have it at once.'

'But this is contrary to our agreement, which allows me twenty-one days, and then I am entitled to notice.'

'Those are our usual conditions, but it has come to the knowledge of our directors that you have been in difficulty lately, and under such circumstances we always require prompt settlement.'

'My difficulties have been brought about by a vile conspiracy, and because of that do you expect me to be walking around with nine pounds in my pocket to pay my rent at a moment's demand? The thing is impossible, but I will let you have it to-morrow without fail, to-day if I can in any way.'

'I am very sorry, Mr Pawley, but I cannot exceed my instructions. I must either have your rent now or leave a man in charge.'

'But such proceedings are monstrous.'

'Perhaps they are a little high-handed, but I have no choice in the matter. You see the rent was really due two days ago, and the law allows us to make instant demand.'

With this he beckoned to a man who was waiting in the distance, and duly installed him in possession.

'Shall we never escape from this entanglement?' asked Elinor pitifully, as Case took his departure. Ernest took her in his arms but said nothing; the broker's man however made bold to answer her.

'Not if somebody can help it you won't, ma'am, but, so help my bob, I hope they'll be took in! These jobs ain't any too pleasant for anybody - for me any more'm you - and I won't make myself any more of a nuisance than I can help. I got my head jammed into this kind of work through misfortune, and I've never been able to get clear of it again, but it's degrading, and I ain't in love with it, I can tell you. Now I

ai'n't going to be in any way obtrusive while I have to stop; just give me a chair or a box and I'll make myself as comfortable as may be in one of the empty rooms. Nobody will see or hear anything of me, and if the youngsters want to know who I am say I'm Uncle Joe; they'll never be none the wiser. After that, mister take my advice and scrape what bit you need together and pay me out. And there's just another word I want to say; do your business with me and no one else, for I have heard a little bird whistle, and between you and me and the bed-post they don't want you to get clear, and won't let you do so if they can help it.'

'But they have no right to treat us in this way,' said Elinor, who was not unfavourably impressed with the straightforward candour of the man.

'Don't disturb yourself over that, ma'am. They do queer things in London, I can tell you, whether they have a right to do them or not. You've got a friend at the back of this little job who is used to dirty business, and you needn't hope for much mercy, I can tell you.'

'Who is it?' she asked artlessly.

'Well, you see, it's hardly fair to peach on your own guv'nors, and a man has to know who he's dealing with. But darn me if this ain't about one of the toughest jobs I've had, and I do like to see things a bit "hasurn-jasum" as we say in Brassington.'

'Are you a Brassington man?' she asked.

'Born and bred, ma'am.'

'So am I.'

'Well, now! The world ain't very wide, is it? Perhaps you wouldn't think it, but I worked at Blackley & Carter's for nearly twenty years.'

'Did you know Mr Henry Dean?'

'I should think I did and all. Why, he always did his best to keep me from the drink. If I had followed his advice I should not have been here now. Did you know him, ma'am?'

'He is my father.'

'What! Well, now! God bless me, but ain't I glad! This is a bit of all right! If I don't pull you through this bit of business now - well, jotter me!'

'Yes, you will tell us what we can do,' she cried hopefully.

'Trust me to do that for your father's sake. But here, why don't you write to him if you have any doubt about getting the money?'

'Because he did not agree with our leaving Cottominster to come to London, and cautioned us if we got into any trouble through it we need not expect him to pull us out of the fire.'

'That's just like him; if he can't have his way everything can go to the devil. Look

here, Pawley, do you know Foxleigh, the quack doctor?’

‘Only too well!’ he replied.

‘He’s the trump in this little deal, straight. He has a lot of shares and influence in our company, and has fixed it up to chuck you into the street on New Year’s Day. That’s why Case was so hard.’

‘God help us!’ cried Elinor; ‘will Foxleigh never be satisfied?’

‘Lord bless you, ma’am, you mustn’t expect him to be. His heart is as hard as a hundred-ton gun. I know him.’

‘Don’t be afraid, little woman,’ replied her husband. ‘God reigns and Foxleigh will receive his reward.’

‘That’s all very well, but God ain’t got half so much to do with this business as the quack, and he’s the one you will have to consider first. Now you take my tip and scrape this money together as soon as you can, because you can’t keep on paying me five bob a day. But till you’ve got the lot don’t pay anything on account; it’s only throwing money into the gutter to do that. Next, do all your business wi’ me; it’s in my hands now, and I’m going to see you through it if there’s a chance.’

There was something about the man, apart from his acquaintance with Elinor’s father, that never allowed them to doubt his honesty for a moment, and though his presence in the house was a constant reminder of the extremity towards which they were hourly drifting - for do as he would Ernest could make no progress towards raising the money - he was in no way offensive, but rather otherwise by the way he encouraged them to hope and expect deliverance even at the last moment.

‘Keep up a good heart,’ he said when he heard Pawley’s report on the third evening; you’ve got another day yet, and we can never tell what may turn up at the last moment. Lord bless your hearts, I could tell you tales of what has happened at such times as would make your hair stand on end; and to tell you the truth, though we don’t let it be known, it’s what may happen at the last moment that we chaps dread like seeing ghosts. I’ve seen such impossible things as makes my flesh creep to think about them. It ain’t once in a hundred times that we take the things, and I’m just as confident as I am that I’m sitting here that we sha’nt have yours.’ The fellow was lying as fast as his inventive genius would allow him, but with true Jesuitical casuistry he determined that Elinor’s spirits must be maintained, but the apparently certain culmination was a prospect he definitely refused to entertain. ‘You see you have got the whole of the day to-morrow, because we can’t touch the things till noon on Wednesday, even if the worst does come to the worst. So, while we hope for the best, and you make another effort to get what you want, I’ll help the missis to pack up what bit o’s things you would like to keep, as well as your clothes, for of course you can have them; then if you can’t do the trick - well, I’ll give you a wrinkle!’

Case looked in on his way to the city in the morning to ascertain how things

stood, and to remind Pawley that he had entered upon the last day of probation, since the company were determined not to allow an extension of time under any circumstances. Unless the full amount of the rent, together with all dues and expenses, could be paid on the following morning, they must be prepared to vacate at once, the house not being reasonably expected to furnish more than sufficient to meet the claim.

Pawley made no attempt to dispute the estimate, having learned from Joe something of the methods pursued on such occasions and the profits expected. He contented himself by saying that the man had already explained everything and he fully comprehended what had to be done. Then the agent went his way, calling on Foxleigh as he passed, who was very solicitous to know how the case proceeded.

Pawley bade his wife keep up a good heart even though he might be late in returning, and he made a desperate effort to be brave as he assured her that come what would the day would be decisive in its issues not only in relation to their home but his faith as well. They had now in very truth reached an extremity, and the question had to be decided once and for all beyond the possibility or cavil of contradiction whether God does intervene.

‘Pray for me, darling, even as I will pray for you. Let us each hold up the other’s hands until we prevail - or die.’

‘Don’t be afraid, my lad, we shall not fail.’

So he left his home, and threw himself into the final round of the conflict.

Big Ben was striking ten o’clock. Another two hours and the year would be dead - the new year would be born, and Pawley would see his wife and children homeless! There was no way to avoid it now, and he was compelled to face the fact in all its crushing force. While business hours were passing, in spite of every discouragement he managed to maintain a spark of hope. God was trying him to see what he could bear with some unrevealed design of fitting him to do a work that needed heroic faith, and in the assurance of that idea he went forward, every step only carrying him into the deeper gloom of his Gethesmane. When the business houses closed, and it was past all hope that he could succeed in that direction, he did not despair, but hurried to find Gradeley, who had gone home early. Without a word of complaint - only a regret that it would cause him to be late getting home - he set out on a weary tramp to Ealing, certain that his friend would find some means of helping him, but he dared not spend the money to ride. Gradeley was sorry, genuinely sorry, but almost in a similar position.

From Ealing he went to Kensington - desperation lending the needed strength - determined to see Harleston or his wife, being confident of meeting with sympathy and consideration from the latter. She was ill, had been in bed a week or more, and Harleston indignantly refused to see him. It was nine o’clock! There was still one last chance - Mr Rose. If that failed, heaven alone remained. It was not far to Earl’s

Court, and buoyed up with hope he soon rang the bell. Mr Rose was out of town.

Now the clock was striking ten and Pawley was standing on Waterloo Bridge. How or why he came there he never knew, for with the final extinction of hope he passed into a semi-comatose condition, where the sweets of suffering feed insensible consciousness, and the arms of the inevitable bear the martyr towards the fascination of despair.

The sound of the bell, like the slow and ominous boom of an execution summons, aroused him. He looked around, recognised his whereabouts and condition. His last hope had gone, and nothing now remained but God and death. He did not fear, simply felt, and yet he was so far dead already as to be insensible to pain, though his mind rushed forward with all the freedom and liberty of a disembodied soul. Memory had not to be recalled - it lay unrolled before him, and as he lingered over the current of his life since leaving Cottominster he felt relieved to find no sign or voice of accusation rising against him. 'If you could live those months again and carry back the experience of this moment, would you do the same, knowing what lay before you?' What unseen voice questioned him thus? He looked around, then boldly answered, 'Yes! I have done no wrong - save only to myself.' It was perhaps nothing but his conscience that acquitted him and answered, 'It is well.'

The thought of Elinor and his children woke him from his dream. Was there no possible way by which the fate of the future could be avoided? And in answer to his thought a terrible idea suggested itself. Could he give his life for them? The English nature is slow to be aroused, but deeds of heroic self-sacrifice always stirred it to its depths. The story that would be told at his inquest would excite such a wave of sympathy that Elinor and the children would be well taken care of, and he would only be separated from her for a little while. It was the test of true love. Had he the strength to dare it, without another word, a kiss, a last farewell?

As he dwelt upon it the fascination of the idea took firmer hold upon him, until he gravitated towards one of the recesses, mounted the seat, and peered through the blackness at the muddy stream rolling out towards the sea.

'God help me!' he cried in a heartbreaking agony. 'Save me, oh, my God, or take me!'

'Surely I know that voice,' said someone close behind him.

Pawley turned, ashamed and confused. It was too dark to recognise the features of the man who laid his hand upon him as he spoke, but there was no mistaking the voice. Only one could speak in those calm, soft, and yet authoritative tones. A second time his Unknown friend had saved him.

'It was fortunate I heard you,' said the stranger, taking him by the arm and drawing him from the seat. 'You are the one man in all London I wished to see just now. In fact, I was on my way to find you.'

‘It is very fortunate you happened to come this way.’ replied Pawley, wondering how much had been heard, or how much of the truth was suspected.

‘The man whose steps are regularly ordered by the Lord seldom takes the wrong road. At least, that is my experience. Which way are you going?’

‘I scarcely know. I am at your service entirely if you wish to see me. I was looking over the bridge at the river.’

‘I would have chosen some brighter prospect, had I been you, at such a time. I think we will walk towards the Strand.’ And without waiting for any reply he linked his arm in Pawley’s and drew him away from the scene of his temptation.

‘So Blake decided to betray us after all,’ he began at once.

‘Did you hear of it?’ he inquired mournfully. How often have I wished that I knew where to find you. I thought when it occurred that I should lose my wife as well as my home.’

‘The providences of God have well-defined limits, my friend, beyond which no man is allowed to pass. I knew He would not make such a demand upon your obedience,’ adding with a significant emphasis, ‘Neither does He require such a sacrifice on her part.’

Ernest turned and looked him full in the face in an attempt to read his secret meaning and try to understand how much he knew, but his face was pleasantly inscrutable.

‘How do you know that?’

‘A bruised reed will He not break,’ was the quiet but confident reply.

‘There are times when one almost doubts that.’

‘That is because you do not know Him better.’ Then, changing the subject, he said, ‘But you do not appear to have come to the end of your trouble; and for this it was that I desired to see you.’

‘Who are you?’ asked Pawley, stopping suddenly, ‘who, though unknown to me, not only know me and my affairs so well, but have twice intervened in the moment of my extremity?’

‘Is that so?’ he inquired with a satisfaction he took no pains to conceal. Then I have been most signally blessed in the ministry for which God has chosen me. For the present you must be satisfied to know me as Frank St. Clear. I travel a great deal and occasionally have small matters of business to arrange in London. I have numerous agencies at my disposal and have not much difficulty in ascertaining such information as I may desire. Through these I was able to render you some slight service when last in town; now I wish if possible to secure your co-operation and assistance. So far I have had no occasion for any postal address in England, but for a time at least such a necessity has now arisen, and since some immediate provision

has to be made for yourself I trust we may be able to arrange something to our mutual benefit.'

'In what way?' asked the bewildered Pawley, wondering what was coming next.

'I wish you to understand that I am fully acquainted with your present condition. But for purposes of my own, which I will not now explain, I do not propose to save your home at Dulwich, but have provided another which is now ready for you to go into tomorrow. You and I are both servants of the same Master, let us be fellow-workers and consent to help each other.'

Was ever a man tossed so systematically from one extremity of the miraculous to the other? At one moment floundering hopelessly in the depths of despair and at the next standing upon the glory-crowned heights of an apparently omnipotent assurance; one instant friendless and alone, contemplating a plunge into the Thames, and the next entrusted with a stewardship by one who spoke of the ordinary affairs and perplexities of life as insignificant trifles in the balance of existence. Who was the strange personage with whom he had been brought into such mysterious association - and the mystery of his identity deepened rather than otherwise as Pawley heard more of him. The calm authority with which he spoke and moved; the natural grace and unconsciousness with which he suggested his possession of abnormal powers; the absence of all excitement, the patient dignity, the cool strength which pervaded all he said and did, weaved around him the halo of some mythical hero from a legend of the Middle Ages rather than designated him to be a matter-of-fact man of the nineteenth century. So Pawley conjectured as he walked and listened.

'As I have told you, I require only a postal address for purely technical purposes connected with business I have in hand,' continued St Clear, 'but the house I have taken and modestly furnished will, I hope, be found suitable to your demands.'

'And what am I to do to thank and repay you for such unexpected and providential deliverance?' required Pawley.

'Oblige me by taking possession now; and should any correspondence arrive receive it for me. For the present I ask no more, so that I shall not interfere with your business in any way. At some future time I may have requests to make, but you may rest assured they will never be beyond your power to grant. Do you accept my offer?'

'May God repay your kindness,' stammered the deeply-moved Pawley. 'Yes, I will accept your gift, and beg to assure you that whatever your future demands shall be you may be confident of a ready response.'

'Be careful that the release from your present trouble does not lead you to promise more than you will be able to perform,' he answered in smiling admonishment.

'I will trust you for that even as you now trust me.'

‘And in this one instance you shall not find your confidence misplaced. Here is the key of your new abode, the address you will find on the label attached. The landlord is your next-door neighbour, to whom I have given your name, and he will expect your arrival sometime to-morrow. Now, make all speed home to your wife, and though I am unknown to her, convey my wishes for a happy new year. Good-night.’

A cab was passing at the instant into which he sprang and was gone without another word.

Pawley looked at the key in his hand, on the tag of which he read, ‘110 Laureate Road, Acton, W.’ Then breathing a fervent ‘Thank God’ he hailed a cab, thinking less of the expense than of his wife’s anxiety, and behind the leaden heels of a fleet horse he hurried home.

‘What did I tell you, now?’ cried Joe who had been called into the kitchen to hear the news. ‘I’ve seen it again and again in my experience. You can never tell how this game ends till the last card is down. But, by jingo! I’m as pleased over this as if somebody had given me a fiver. Now, we’ve only got to finish the dusting, as the scullery maid says, and I can do that while you have your supper. Of course all these sort of things come as natural to me as a duck to the water. We’ve packed up every blessed thing that’s likely to be of special use to you ready for being carted off; and I’ve mentioned the matter to a pal - that was him who called just now, missis.’ Elinor signified assent, ‘and he is ready to take them to his place where they will be as safe as the bank till you want them. But now you know where you are going, for, say half a sovereign I will undertake to deliver them at Acton to-morrow. What do you say?’

Ernest shook his head doubtfully.

‘I don’t know what to say, Joe; I am getting almost afraid to trust anybody now.’

‘And I don’t wonder at it, either,’ replied the fellow, in no way offended by the hesitation. But I, at least, have done the square thing for you while I have been here, and you will have to do something with the things before morning or our people will have a good half of them back again. I don’t suppose you know where to send them?’

‘You are quite right there. I have neither a place nor a friend.’

‘Well, I don’t know about that. At least, if I ain’t a friend, I’m willing to give you a hand. The missis knows I’m all right, don’t you?’

‘Yes, Joe; I can trust you, and so could my husband if he was not so heartsick.’

‘That’s all I want. Now you get on with your supper, and we’ll be back with the hand-cart in no time.’

The man had not been in any way officious, but it was a great relief to eat that frugal meal and see the old year die out together and alone.

When the timepiece had finished striking Ernest crossed to the other side of the

table and kissed her.

'They are not the most propitious circumstances, my darling,' he said with his heart rising into his throat. 'God knows it is the most sorrowful prospect I have ever had upon entering a new year. But faith has passed its trial and conquered, and in the newness of its triumph, and full trust in God for the future, I hope we are about to begin a new life, and that the trouble now lies buried with the year that has gone.'

'God bless my lad. I knew He would not forsake us.' Then they snatched a hurried kiss, for there was a rap at the door.

'That's Joe', he said. 'His friend must live pretty near at hand.'

A dark, thick-set figure stood motionless before him as he opened the door, like a silhouette of evil, and he instinctively drew back into the darkened hall. Half blinded by his sudden rush from the light he was unable to discover any sign of relief in the dark outline scarcely distinguishable against the background of the street. There was a tall silk hat, and beneath it a greyish cloud which should be a face, and lower a patch of white proving to be a shirt front, above which he gradually traced the livid face of Foxleigh, the mouth broadening into a sardonic grin.

'Is it you, Pawley? Yes, I see it is now, and am glad to find you in. I was anxious to be the first to wish you a Happy New Year, and I hope you, your wife and cubs will thoroughly enjoy your walking tour. You thought you could defy me, didn't you? You did it beautifully for a time and laughed at me, but you see I have managed to have my way in the end, and your God has not been quite so useful to you as I might have been. Perhaps this little incident will teach you how to respect your superiors in the future. Oh, Mrs Pawley, how do you do?' for Elinor had recognised the voice and came forward to the support of her husband. 'I was just expressing my hope to your husband that you won't take cold in your walking tour. The wind is bitter to begin with, but you must not blame me for that; I should have preferred to see you away about - let me see - five weeks ago.'

Pawley felt restrained from answering, and allowed him to finish all he had to say, then, while the cruel hypocrite rubbed his hands and laughed in his imagined triumph, Pawley's tongue was loosed.

'Yes, Samuel Foxleigh,' he answered in a singularly calm and sorrowful voice, free from either harshness or resentment, I believe you speak the truth for once when you say you have done your best to accomplish our ruin, but your malicious inspiration was drawn from the fount of failure. Your scheme, so carefully planned and so systematically carried out up to the moment when you have come to drink your anticipated sweet draught of revenge, has collapsed in its climax, as all the schemes of hell must needs fail in the moment of success. My God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, and not even Samuel Foxleigh is able to prevent Him. You have come here to rejoice over and taunt me in the moment when you imagined to find me homeless, but surely you have forgotten that

all the merriment and jubilation known in hell consists of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, and even this has God reserved for you. True rejoicing is in heaven over salvation, and this our God has granted to us in our extremity. He hath sent His angel, who has delivered us at the last moment, and already a house awaits us better than this from which you have schemed to drive us. Don't play the coward in your chagrin, but make an effort to be a man while you listen to your defeat. I have not sought this interview, but God has compelled you here that from the lips of your victim you might learn His truth. I have not asked, neither did I dream that such a Nemesis would overtake you at my hands, but since God has willed it so, even though I pity you, I will not shirk my duty. You have driven me from hence, but God has provided for me, and your machinations which have been foiled heretofore, have been ruined in the end, and when I leave here in a few hours it will be to enter upon a new year in which you will be allowed to play no part, unless it be to reap the harvest of your own treachery. Now you may go. Unless God wills it otherwise, I have done with you. The new year has come and I am anxious to close my door upon the shadow of hell which has been linked with, but must dissolve with, the year now dead. The morning will break with hope for us, and you I am content to leave in the hands of a just God.'

Foxleigh would gladly have left at once when he discovered the mistake he had made, but the passionless voice of Pawley held him, and he was constrained to stand until the speaker dismissed him. Then Pawley closed the door and placed an impassable barrier between 'the peace of God' which reigned within and the torments of the damned which reigned without.

Chapter XXVI - The Harvest Of Foxleigh's Threat

The house at Acton was found to be in every particular quite ready for occupation; fires were laid, so that Ernest had but to apply the match, while Elinor attended to the children and herself, and a liberal supply of provisions enabled them at once to make a good meal after their journey. Of course the children were delighted with their new home and very solicitous to know whether it was all their own; what was going to be done with the one at Dulwich, and whether Uncle Joe was still going to live with them. But Elinor, naturally restless until she had an opportunity to go from room to room and see how the domicile was arranged and provided for, evaded their questions with a view to their not being repeated and thus saved the need of explanations.

Every necessity had been carefully considered, and when she had completed her survey she confessed that their requirements had been thoughtfully anticipated, though had she been consulted in the furnishing she would have chosen to give the house a less solid and heavy appearance.

'I don't want you to think I am fastidious or in any way ungrateful, dear; but I am

a woman and look upon the place with woman's eyes. Mr. St. Clear has done just what I should have done myself - impressed the house with his own individuality, and as I go through it I can read the character of the man very clearly. It helps me to know him and will assist me in studying him before I see him, so that when we do meet we shall not be quite such strangers as might otherwise have been. That he is firm, strong and full of work is very evident - rest does not trouble him much.'

'How do you know that, dear?'

'Because there is not a really easy chair in all the house. But all the furniture is solid and durable, by which I read him as a man to be trusted, and that will be more to us than many easy chairs. Still I wish I did know him if only just a little, because, as we have to live here, I should like to make a few alterations and soften the aspect a little when Joe brings the other things. I wonder whether he would mind my doing so?'

'Certainly he would not. I should think he left the knickknacks for you to arrange, and from what I have seen of him he will be pleased to find you have added such finishing touches.'

So they began their new life.

Towards evening Joe and his friend arrived with the salvage of the old home, and Elinor speedily distributed her available treasures and gave a more familiar aspect to their sitting-room.

A small back room upstairs was very modestly furnished as if for a suggested study, and upon its few shelves were about fifty volumes very carefully selected for a comprehensive introduction to such subjects as might commend themselves to Pawley. But perhaps the most noticeable feature, certainly the one that commanded the first attention of both Ernest and his wife, was the six volumes of Cassell's *Old and New London* lying upon the table, one of which was lying open as if St Clear himself had been interested in the story of Westminster Abbey.

Nearly three weeks passed by and nothing had been heard of their daily-expected visitor, for they thought he would surely call to see them after they were settled. Then Pawley received a letter from a solicitor in the city asking him to call at his earliest convenience. He went the same day and found that Mr. St Clear had been in town and was instituting proceedings against Kaleb & Co. for conspiracy in his own and other cases, and the lawyer wanted such information from Pawley as would be sufficient to secure the case being sent to the Old Bailey, which was ultimately done.

During the preliminary proceedings two letters were received for St Clear marked 'important,' but Pawley had no instructions and, as they were not called for, he was compelled to keep them. He mentioned the fact to the solicitor from whom they came, and was not a little surprised to find that St Clear had attended to them as though they had been received and carefully considered. This only deepened the mystery of his identity in Pawley's mind and evidently caused the lawyer some little

perplexity. But he said nothing.

The Central Criminal Court was most inconveniently crowded, and outside the door was still a struggling multitude, many of whom were willing to give a liberal bribe to gain admission. The case about to be tried had already sent a thrill of excitement not only through London but the country as well, on account of the position of the men who had to face the judge, and the sensational developments expected. Legal gentlemen and pressmen crowded equally with the general public, and every available seat upon the bench had been assigned to persons of distinction, not a few of whom it was whispered might possibly be called as witnesses for the defence.

In the well of the Court, St Clear and Pawley sat on either side their solicitor, and immediately in front of the two counsel secured for the prosecution.

The judge had scarcely taken his seat before eight men appeared in the dock - a company probably unique in the annals of the Central Criminal Court up to that time. Five of the men we already know - Foxleigh, Harleston, Blake, Lucas and Clamb; the others we need only mention as members of the Foxleigh brigade, since our story demands no more personal introduction.

Harleston, still true to himself, leisurely looked around, smiled and made his ceremonious acknowledgments to such friends as met his gaze. He was evidently impressed with the humour of the occasion and one could almost imagine the various notes he made of salient points he would use in a contemplated article justifying the course he had taken.

Foxleigh was still the senior deacon, carefully groomed and gloved, his Prince Albert coat buttoned over his broad chest and a faultless white rose - his favourite flower - in his buttonhole. Certainly he was a trifle paler than usual, but that was due to his sleeping in town last night, and in no way to be connected with the case in which he figured so prominently.

The indictment charging them jointly and severally with conspiracy, fraud and other illegal practices was read by the clerk of the Court, to which they individually pleaded not guilty, and -

The leading counsel for the prosecution rose to open the case, which he characterised as one of the most heinous it had ever been his duty to expose, not only because of the unrelenting heartlessness which had been used in the ruin of its unwary victims, but because the prisoners at the bar had not hesitated to pursue their inhumanities under the garb of philanthropists wearing the cloak of religion. Taking up a circular issued by Kaleb & Co., with which firm he would show that all the accused were more or less actively associated and which circular was put into the hands of intending clients, he desired to call the attention of the jury to the following paragraphs: -

‘It has long been felt advisable that some provision should be made to assist small

tradesmen, artisans and others who, by sickness, accident, or other misfortune, are placed in temporary embarrassment, apart from the extortionate interests and other undesirable features of the regular loan offices. It is confidently hoped that some scheme of a national character will shortly be formulated for this purpose, but to aid present requirements a few Christian philanthropists have determined to band themselves together in an attempt to relieve approved and urgent cases.'

A further paragraph declared that -

'All interest on loans will be charged upon the lowest possible working basis to cover expenses. But in any case where circumstances may suggest interest being charged upon a higher scale to cover exceptional risks, such excess will always be allowed upon prompt settlement of the claim.'

Asking the jury to bear these promises in mind, he proceeded to sketch the methods upon which these 'few Christian philanthropists' conducted their business as evidenced in the cases he proposed to call before the Court, after which he felt convinced they would have no difficulty in giving him the verdict he asked, and the men at the bar receive such an exemplary punishment as would prove salutary to others who were like minded with themselves.

A former clerk of Kaleb's identified the books and papers seized in the office as being the official working stock of the company previously kept by himself. Having given evidence to show the nature of the partnership existing between six of the accused and a seventh recently deceased, the counsel asked witness, -

'Will you now turn to the account book and give me the results of one or two transactions? Take first the case of James Thomson.'

'He borrowed two pounds for two months, for which he was to repay five pounds.'

'Did he pay the money?'

'No! His goods were seized.'

'And how did the transaction balance?'

'With a credit of eleven pounds nine shillings to the company.'

After several similar cases -

'Now turn to the account of Ernest Pawley. I think the book shows he borrowed five pounds?'

'Yes; for one month, at two pounds interest.'

'Were his goods seized?'

'Yes!'

'With what result?'

'A profit of fifty-three pounds four shillings.'

'That will do.'

Counsel for the defence rose for cross-examination, and, giving his gown the usual professional hitch at the shoulders, asked -

'I suppose you thought these charges a trifle excessive?'

'Well, they are high enough to pay expenses.'

'Don't try to be funny. When you were with them, did you not think that if the company charged so much you might try to do a little for yourself?'

'I did not.'

'Don't lose your temper, but tell me, were you not dismissed because Mr Kaleb detected you charging small commissions to arrange matters?'

'No! I voluntarily resigned.'

'Yes - yes! I know that, but you were allowed to do so because your employers did not wish to get you into trouble.'

'It's false!'

'Will you swear that?'

'I will!'

'If I prove it will you still swear it?'

'You cannot prove it.'

'We will see about that presently. You may go now.'

During the latter part of their cross-examination St Clear handed a letter to the solicitor, who glanced at it and passed it to his counsel.

'Is that your letter of resignation?' he asked.

'It is.'

'Will you read it to the Court?'

'It is written upon the official paper and runs as follows: -

"Messrs Kaleb & Co.

"GENTLEMEN, - While I have no right to dictate to you as to the methods upon which you conduct your business, I am in duty bound to consider my own safety in connection with the same; and feeling sure that a criminal prosecution will sooner or later be the result, I beg to notify you of my intention to terminate my engagement on Saturday next. - Yours faithfully,

"THOMAS WORRALL."

'Did you leave on the day stated?'

'I did.'

‘And have had no connection with the company since that time?’

‘None whatever.’

Then came the evidence of an array of victims whose stories gradually presented a crescendo of inhumanity and suffering terminating with Ernest Pawley.

‘This gentleman is my case,’ said the leader as the last witness left the box.

The advocate for the defence at once proceeded to draw the minds of the jury from the evidence he had been unable to shake in cross-examination, and direct them to the popular position and brilliant careers of at least two of his clients. The universal estimation in which Harleston had so long been held was a treasure-trove to him in his endeavour, which was used with eloquent force and masterly effect; and Foxleigh’s most infatuated admirer had never been able to parade his princely philanthropy in such significant splendour as it wore that day. Laudatory speeches and graphic articles, in which language had failed to do justice in their eulogies, were brought forth and read with pointed emphasis, followed by artful comments which cast a glory over the whole of the accused. So adroitly did the pleader manipulate his discourse, so quietly and unaffectedly did he juggle with fact, inference and deduction, so cunningly did he capture their sympathy, and impress upon them the undoubted probity and the unstained honour of the men who had won such testimonies on every hand as he had read to them, that when he began to pour his torrent of raillery upon the quality of the evidence adduced by his learned friend who led the prosecution, he carried not only the crowded Court, but also the jury with him, and sat down amidst a spontaneous outburst of applause the officials had a difficulty to suppress.

He knew he had secured his point, and before he lost a trace of the advantage he had gained called his first witness to the box and left him in the hands of his junior.

The whole line of the defence moved in the direction of the opening speech, and the weight of influence, position and popularity from the circles of art, literature science, commerce and religion were brought forward in opposition to the testimony of the unknown witnesses of the other side. Ladies and gentlemen whose honour was above suspicion, and names known as widely as Harleston and Foxleigh, ministers with whom most of the accused had been working for years in the most exemplary Christian capacities, emulated each other in the contempt they felt for the impossible insinuations which had been made against men with whom they had been honoured to associate. And through the long chorus of adulation the prosecuting counsel sat still, knowing that his case was going to pieces, but he had no single question to ask until the last of the long line - Pinchbeck - turned to leave the box. Then he rose to his feet.

‘You are the minister of Mount Pisgah Church, I believe?’

‘Ye-es!’ he drawled.

'Pawley was a member of that church for some time, I think?'

'A very short time.'

'What sort of character did he bear?'

'I cannot say; I knew very little of him.'

'Was he not a kind of curate or local preacher for you?'

'I believe he did preach occasionally on the Common.'

'Are you not sure about it?'

'Ye-es! I know he did.'

'And you introduced him to Foxleigh, suggesting that he should be allowed to do so on behalf of your church?'

'I can't say that.'

'Did you introduce him to Foxleigh, sir?' this was asked in a tone that considerably startled Pinchbeck.

'I believe I did.'

'For what purpose?'

'Some of our young people wished to have an outdoor meeting, and Pawley had been asked to speak.'

'Did Foxleigh agree to the proposition?'

'Not at first. Mount Pisgah is not a mission church.'

'What made Foxleigh change his mind?'

'I cannot say.'

'I want to remind you that you are a minister and on your oath. Was anything said about Pawley's connection with Harleston?'

'I think it was mentioned.'

'And it was then Foxleigh changed his mind?'

'It may have been.'

'Was it, sir, or was it not?' sternly.

'I believe it was.'

'Did Foxleigh consent to the meetings being held, and then offered Pawley his advertisement for Harleston's new paper?'

'I am sure I don't remember.'

'Was anything said about an advertisement?'

'I think there was.'

'Did Pawley accept it?'

'No! He said he had no room for it.'

'I am glad your memory is reviving. But did not Pawley say it belonged to a class of advertisements he could not accept?'

'I don't know.'

'Did he and Foxleigh have words about it, and Pawley said his consent to the meetings on the Common was only in the shape of a bribe to get his advertisement accepted?'

'I forget.'

'Now, sir, I want you to be very careful how you answer, or the consequences may be serious to you. You remember Pawley leaving Foxleigh's that morning?'

'Yes.'

'Who was present beside you and Foxleigh?'

'Mr Blake.'

'Do you remember what was said?'

'No!'

'Let me help you, and I caution you to mind what you are about. Did not Foxleigh suggest that you and he should call upon Harleston?'

'How do you know?'

'Never mind how I know. You see I do know. Did he do so?'

'Someone did.'

'Did you call upon Harleston?'

'Not then.'

'Did you ever do so with Foxleigh?'

'I think I did.'

'And arranged that Pawley should be persuaded to borrow this particular five pounds from Blake?'

'I am not certain.'

'You had better be certain, sir. Were you there or not when this arrangement was entered into?'

The witness was silent, and a hush like that of death was over the Court, but the counsel was inflexible.

'Will you answer my question?'

'No! I decline to do so.'

'Answer the question,' said the judge, severely.

'I think I was there.'

'So do I. Now we will come to the night when Pawley's goods were taken. Did you make any calls that night?'

'Yes, I made several pastoral visits.'

'Who did you call on?'

'I think I called first at Mr Foxleigh's.'

'Was that by appointment?'

'Will you excuse me, but what has all this to do with the case?'

'We shall see that presently. Did you call there by appointment?'

'My lord, I wish to appeal for your protection.'

'I think you had better answer the question,' replied his lordship, with calm indifference.

'Yes! I called to see him upon church business.'

'Who did you meet there?'

'Only Mr Blake in addition to Mr Foxleigh.'

'Anyone else?'

'No!'

'Will you swear that?'

'Yes!'

'Did the prisoner Clamb call there?'

'He called to see Mr Blake.'

'Now I caution you again to mind what you are doing. Did you know he was coming before he arrived?'

'I think Mr Blake had said he expected someone to call.'

'And also what he was calling for?'

'Perhaps so - but I forget.'

'And what did Clamb call for?'

'I don't know.'

'Do you remember him saying that Pawley had a devilish fiery temper and, he had taken the precaution to get two extra strong men in readiness for a fight?'

'I forget.'

'Did not Foxleigh suggest the adoption of a ruse to get him out of the house while

the goods were taken away?’

‘I forget.’

‘I shall find means to make you regret your short memory presently. Did you not suggest that you go back home and that he should be sent for you to speak a word in his behalf?’

‘I think not.’

By this time the whole Court was in a state of most intense excitement at the unexpected turn the case had taken. Mr Pinchbeck was in a most pitiable condition; he might be able to guard his words, but the evidence was plainly written upon his face and in his whole manner. His tormentor, however, was as cool and inexorable as a stone.

‘You left Foxleigh’s with Clamb?’

‘I think I did.’

‘You remember that. Had you finished your church business?’

‘No!’

‘You remember that. Why did you leave before you had finished?’

‘I wanted to get home.’

‘Why?’

‘Because - of family prayers.’

‘Don’t be a hypocrite sir!’ he said sharply. ‘Do you remember what you said to Clamb when you left him at Foxleigh’s gate?’

‘I simply wished him good-night.’

‘Did you ask him not to hurry too much but give you good time to get home?’

‘If I did it was merely incidentally.’

‘And I suppose Pawley’s subsequent call was also incidentally?’

‘No - I that is - ’

‘What is it, sir?’

No reply. Pinchbeck was cornered at last.

‘You were not surprised to see Pawley?’

But the minister was dumb.

After this collapse the issue was a foregone conclusion. The judge summed up the case with that keen, impartial insight and direction to the jury which gives such value to justice in an English Court, and the twelve ‘good men and true’ gave their verdict after a short consultation. The prisoners were found to be guilty upon each separate count.

The judge in passing sentence simply remarked that such outrages upon humanity and religion as those of which the prisoners had justly been found guilty merited a severe punishment, and carefully regarding the whole circumstances of the case he could do no less than send Blake, Foxleigh and Clamb to penal servitude for ten years; the other prisoners, with the exception of Lucas, would undergo a sentence of seven years; but taking into account the youth and recent connection of Lucas with the firm, although he had shown himself to be a congenial spirit with his employers, he thought that a sentence of five years would amply meet his case.

A suppressed shudder ran through the Court at the severity of the punishment. The crowd outside heard the result in silence, and it ran through the metropolis like an electric quiver, and through the nerves of the telegraph to every corner of the land.

‘Whatsoever a man soweth *that* shall he also reap,’ said St Clear, taking Pawley’s arm and drawing him towards Ludgate Hill.

‘But it was an awful sentence.’ he replied.

‘It was a just one for the crimes.’ Then, hailing a cab, he said in a lighter vein, ‘Tell your wife I hope to call to-morrow and make her acquaintance, if agreeable.’

‘Will you not come home with me now?’

‘No thank you; ladies do not care to be taken at a disadvantage; besides, I have other arrangements for to-night. To-morrow at six.’

Then stepping into the cab he gave the order ‘West,’ and was gone.

Chapter XXVII – In The Light Of God

Punctual to his appointment as the sun to the morning St Clear rang Pawley’s bell, and Elinor made the acquaintance of one who had come to their deliverance in the hour of misfortune. He met her with the same easy familiarity with which he introduced himself to Ernest in the office of Kaleb & Co., asked a multitude of questions about the house and its arrangements, was pleased to notice certain changes she had made, and was by no means insensible to the feminine touches added thereto. Then he reverted to the one subject, always so near to the heart of a mother, and asked to be allowed to see the children, with whom he passed little pleasantries and told them one or two pretty stories, captivating their affections and making them anxious for more.

But bedtime had arrived, and mamma was equally anxious to see more of the stranger who was so affable and free while yet in a subtle, indefinable way he made her conscious of the almost infinite distance that lay between them. Did she like him? Yes! She was wonderously drawn towards him from the first, but she was, perhaps not afraid, but doubtfully reticent and uncertain of the visibly unknown

which she felt to be the more real and comprehensive part of the man than what she was permitted to see.

When Ernest had spoken to her of the pregnant mystery in which St Clear frequently clothed his expressions, she had inwardly smiled and flattered herself of her capability to understand them; but now she had seen him she discovered that behind his commonplace remarks and even the smile that played so lightly and incessantly across his features, there was an esoteric suggestion that baffled and almost irritated her. He was an enigma at sight, and the mystery concerning him had deepened perceptibly during the half-hour she had been in his company. On the other hand he had been more than kind to them, and she was excusably impatient to see the children safely in bed that she might rejoin her husband and guest.

‘I hear you are a great traveller,’ she remarked presently, as she took her crochet work from her basket. It had been carefully laid aside on Mr. St Clear’s arrival, but she took it up again under some strange impulse that he would rather not be considered to be a stranger.

‘I think I might legitimately claim to surpass even the achievements of Monte-Cristo in that respect,’ he replied.

‘I hope your - ’ but she paused, confused, and found it necessary to count the loops in the chain she was engaged on.

He smiled pleasantly and calmly finished her sentence ‘Thirst for revenge is not like his!’

In spite of her sense of shame at the indiscretion, she was compelled to lift her eyes in amazement as he gave expression to the identical words she was about to utter. Who could this be who had the power to read her very thoughts? And the mystery concerning him still further deepened in her mind. His generosity however was worthy of his power.

‘No! I shall not emulate him in that respect,’ he added. ‘Still, as in the case of yesterday, to which you refer, there are times when I have been used for purposes of just retribution.’

‘Are we to understand that in the trial you were not acting for yourself but on the behalf of another?’ she inquired, pushing her question farther than her husband would have dared.

‘Certainly! I was simply the minister of God.’

That was scarcely the reply she wanted; it was too ambiguous, but she was equally conscious that it would be futile to attempt to get beyond the limit he had drawn in that direction.

‘Oh!’ she returned with enforced resignation.

‘Did you instruct the solicitor in the case?’ asked Ernest.

‘Yes, I had it altogether in my own hands.’

‘But however did you obtain the information for Pinchbeck’s cross-examination?’

‘I think I have told you that I possess somewhat unusual facilities for obtaining all information I require,’ he replied with that calm deliberation which betrayed nothing beyond the words he uttered. ‘When you are better acquainted with me, perhaps you may be able to understand that the circumstances which form barriers of impossibility to one man are open doors of opportunity to another. In other words, the impossible only exists to those who dream; when we wake the hindrance vanishes like the mist of the morning. “There is nothing impossible with God.”’

‘Nothing?’ asked Elinor, hoping to induce him to go on.

‘Absolutely nothing.’

Several questions rose to her mind, but she was afraid to put them to him. He had evidently said all he intended on that point, so she returned to the one as yet left open.

‘Don’t you think in that terrible sentence of yesterday there was something in excess of just retribution?’

‘No,’ was his quiet, laconic reply.

‘I wish I was so satisfied about it,’ she answered. ‘Perhaps we have suffered as much as many of their victims, and I am willing to admit their crimes were almost too inhuman for belief, but when I think of the men I feel as if their punishment is unwarrantably severe.’

‘In what way are you thinking of the men?’ he inquired.

‘Of the positions they have held, and their age.’

‘Such considerations in my opinion only add to the enormity of their crimes. They are all men of perhaps more than average intelligence therefore ignorance cannot be urged in their behalf as a mitigating plea. The positions they aspired to and ultimately obtained are offices in which the people have learned to repose confidence without inquiry into the actual character of the men who fill them. In a sense they are accepted as the representatives of Christ and His gospel. These men have sought the position only to exploit it; have even outraged the conduct of Judas, have blasphemed God, Crucified Christ afresh, and made His name a mockery and a byword among the people. Can there be any retribution too severe for these offences?’

‘But will not God Himself deal with that?’

‘He has done so in a measure - that is in so far as to justify Himself in the eyes of men by warning them that the way of transgressors is hard. He hears the cry of His children, and the signal deliverances He needs must sometimes grant demands that the oppressor should be destroyed without remedy.’

‘But do you not think they may have deluded themselves by the knowledge of how frequently such acts escape detection?’ asked Ernest.

‘That would only further increase their guilt by showing their readiness to trespass on the generosity of a merciful God. In the positions they filled they professed to know as a matter of practical experience that the “angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” Further they knew that he that toucheth one of the least of Christ’s disciples touches Christ Himself; they had also the caution before their eyes that “whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me” (Christ), “it were better for Him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea.” If they did not know these things they were hypocrites, and have received their reward, if they did know, then they were traitors and have been leniently dealt with.’

‘Still I am heartily sorry for them,’ answered Elinor from her truly womanly heart.

‘So am I for their sin, but I am glad to know their punishment so far has overtaken them.’

‘I should scarcely expect to find you rejoicing at another’s misfortune,’ exclaimed Ernest.

‘This is rather good fortune than otherwise, even to the men who have been deprived of their liberty, and if they are wise they will recognise this and profit by it. I am willing to admit that they had so encouraged and indulged their sins as to become in the end bond-slaves thereto, until had they desired to set themselves at liberty they would have lacked the power to do so unaided. Now the longer a man continues willingly in sin the greater is the penalty incurred, but these men would have gone on from so-called success even to greater outrages. But God is love, and this is equally manifested to the sinner as the saint. These men must not go on, and God has therefore removed them from the scenes and facilities of their sins into conditions calculated to cause reflection, and, if they will, repentance.’

‘But a convict prison is not the most conducive place to penitence.’

‘For their present condition they and they alone are altogether responsible. God would have had it otherwise, but they were not content to be as other men. Taking their fate into their own hands, they have arrogantly lifted their heads towards heaven, blasphemously desecrating the temple of God and slandering the gospel of His truth in order to rob and oppress the helpless. Under such circumstances as these there must of necessity come a time when God shall defend His honour and avenge His own people - the progress of the gospel and the salvation of the world demands it. God does not desire it, but His eternal purposes must go on and the obstructions cleared from His path fall in the places in which they stood. The voice and the warnings of God are clear, explicit and sufficiently timely to allow all who will to escape, but they who will defy Him must needs discover that He is the Almighty One. Still, even a convict prison has advantages as a place of repentance

over hell.'

'Repentance in hell?' queried Elinor, regarding her visitor with a curiously suspicious look.

'Certainly!' he answered with undisturbed composure. If not how can God secure His will "that all men shall be saved"? Christ came into the world to save the world - not a small portion of it; do you imagine that His work will in any way be allowed to be frustrated, while "God is able to save to the uttermost"? Do you think God will arrange a compromise with sin, allowing the evil to claim the greater part of humanity, while He is Almighty and holds dominion over sin in His own right? The idea is repugnant to reason - a veritable contradiction in terms without a vestige of authority in the teaching of Christ. The gospel which will redeem the world, either here or in the beyond, joyfully declares that "As in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive again." This is salvation to the uttermost and must be secured before He can subdue the kingdoms to Himself, receiving the keys from death and hell which He shall cast into the lake of fire. Is it not the finding of the last lost sheep which He sets forth so tenderly in one of His parables - "When he findeth it?" There is no thought, no suspicion of the sheep being dead. In fact there is not one word in the whole of the Bible which points to death as placing any limit on salvation. "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," here the arms of mercy reach to the depths of the nethermost hell, and "God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

'It is a dangerous doctrine to preach.'

'Doctrines never trouble me; if it is God's truth that is enough. I am well aware that one of the errors of the Church has been to manufacture this doctrine of eternal torment under the impression that the fear of hell would be a good whip to drive the flock with, since the shepherds abandoned the Master's example of going before and leading by the magnetic attraction of love. But when the Church did this and went out of the way, God did not change - "With Him there is no variableness, nor shadow of a turning." If God affirmed all the Church declares in His name He would need to be divided in many parts against Himself, and the world itself would speedily be a chaos.'

'But where is the incentive to righteousness if you take hell away?'

'I am not taking hell away. It cannot be dispensed with until it has discharged its function, any more than death can be destroyed until it has wrought its purpose by introducing us into the spiritual life of which it forms the threshold. When both these purposes are accomplished then shall death and hell be cast into the lake of fire. But the incentive to righteousness must lie in the ideal of moral excellence - the aspiration of the soul to be like Him who is "the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely," and the purpose of hell is to assist in bringing about such a desirable consummation.'

'How?'

‘Let me try to sketch an illustration that may assist you in understanding this, and I will try to do it as near as I can in the simple light of the Master’s teaching rather than according to the deep reasonings of the doctrinal fathers. In one of the Beatitudes Christ says: “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” In the Revelations it is added, “They shall see His face.” The whole Church of the redeemed are spoken of as standing in the light of God who is the glory of the place. The figure used is the familiar and natural one of the sun - “The Lord God is a sun and shield.” But if we go behind the sun, where we cannot see His face, we come into the shadow - lose the light, and the further we go the darker our way will be. This is precisely the position into which the sinner falls: “The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” It is here - behind His back - where the sins of the righteous are cast, rolling them away as far as the east is from the west into the blackness and darkness of the region of death, or separation. This is hell! in every sense the reverse of the condition which exists before His face. The one is joy - the other is sorrow; one strength - the other weakness; one peace - the other strife; this compensation - that retribution. Now there is not only punishment, but also method - design - in this location of hell, but in order to appreciate this, allow me to draw your attention to the deplorable fallacy of one prevailing idea. The picture has not unfrequently been drawn of the saints looking over the battlements of heaven to behold the agony of the lost, and no one appears to have noticed this violation of the optical law, by which it is not possible to look from light into darkness, or the erroneous argument would be at once exposed. On the other hand, God - who is still “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” whose mercy endureth to all generations, “without variableness or shadow of a turning” - has located the hell in a shadow from which the suffering sinner may behold the joys of the saints in light, within that city, the gates of which are never shut, but stand an ever-open invitation, that “whosoever will may come,” and “he that cometh shall in no wise be cast out” - this “in no wise” covering even a return from hell. Now, I would further ask your consideration of another thought. Hell is the portion of those who sinned in the days of their flesh. Between the offence and the punishment death has intervened without any disturbance of the law of sequence; why then should it be supposed to put an end to the forgiveness of God, seeing that all His laws and attributes are like Himself immutable?’

‘I would rather hear than attempt to argue,’ replied Ernest as the speaker paused. I feel something like the Athenians must have felt when they said to Paul, “Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean.”’

‘Then I will proceed, but let me ask you not to lose sight of the central idea of my conception of hell which has the dual design and purpose in the mind of God to administer a just punishment for sin, and secure the ultimate salvation of every soul, which is consistently demanded by the unchangeableness of His nature, His expressed will that He “will have all men to be saved,” the object of the Incarnation that “as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive again,” and lastly as

being absolutely essential to Christ's claiming the kingdoms for His own, putting all His enemies beneath His feet, and destroying death and hell. So far I have indicated only a Scriptural and consistent relationship between the two estates in the hereafter. The question I have asked as to whether death has power to arbitrarily interfere with immutable laws may, for the present, stand aside. Now the saints as they approach God become transformed into His image - "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." This likeness, being spiritual, will partake of that nature which is Love, and eternally abounds even to the chief of sinners, and "is able to do far more, exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think." If God so loved the saints while they were yet sinners, will not that same love of God constrain them in turn to minister to the souls in prison, in which we admit that Christ Himself has set us an example? - "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you," and His ministry at this particular moment included Judas, who had not yet gone away to sell His Lord. This ministry to the still lost is under more favourable conditions than earth at present affords, because before the eyes of the sufferer is the vision of the exalted Jesus fulfilling the promise He has made that "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." That such a promise had a wider application than His crucifixion the facts of the case assures us, and the countless millions who have gone down to the pit since that time have to be reclaimed because "He is faithful that promised," and "His word cannot be broken." "Purified by affliction," even "a third part coming through the fire," yet shall they be brought by a way they know not; purging themselves from their sins in their long pilgrimage, washing their robes and making them white in the Blood of the Lamb, they shall come from the east and west, and the north and the south, until hell is left tenantless and Christ is all in all.'

Ernest was intensely interested and followed the daring interpretation closely. It was a new idea to him to base such an argument upon the immutability of God, in which St Clear had used the Scriptures with a freedom which had but slight respect for orthodox methods, and with a novelty of application that at times verged upon the startling. The exposition was given with great deliberation and readiness, speaking of a close familiarity with the subject, strangely impressing Elinor with the idea that in some unaccountable way it amounted to more than belief, but she dared not ask him the one question continually rising to her lips. Her husband was more intent upon following the argument, anxious to understand its reasoning and correctly grasp its points, for further consideration.

'I can now understand the purport of your question in relation to death: you treat it as altogether immaterial as regards the destiny of the soul.'

'Most certainly I do, and by so doing I follow the example of Christ, who, with one exception, placed it upon the same level and treated it in the same way as He did palsy, blindness or possession. The solitary exception was His own death, and that, in two instances, he previously pointed out to be an advantage by compelling it to

bear irrefutable evidence to His Messiahship. Death in the history of the soul is a stage in its existence analogous to the attainment of his majority by a youth; it gives freedom from restraint, and at the same time enforces responsibility; it neither changes the character of the man nor the laws of nature concerning him. You will remember how the Master on one occasion assured His disciples that the kingdom of God was a present matter and within them - they were already in possession of everlasting life and should not come near death. If this law can operate in one direction in its everlasting purpose, surely it can operate also in the other.'

'You are now coming near to a subject upon which I have often thought, and on which I should like to hear your opinion.'

'What is that?'

'To what extent are spiritual gifts available to-day to a consecrated life?'

'They are, as a law of God, unlimited. "All things are possible to him that believeth," but the extent to which they are bestowed is governed by faith, the condition of their bestowal being "according to your faith it shall be unto you."

'Do you really believe that, Mr. St Clear?' asked Elinor.

'No I know it to be so.'

'Then why do you not act upon it?' she inquired, with a quick thrust at what she supposed to be a weakness in his argument.

He smiled pleasantly at her hazard.

'In the first instance I am not a perfect man, hence I may fail occasionally. Next, it may be, that I may not clearly apprehend the Divine purpose at the moment, and am therefore restrained where I would otherwise intervene. For instance, when I was first informed of your own trouble, I was anxious to save you from the plans of Blake, but I was hedged around by such difficulties that you could not believe even were I to try to explain them.'

'Mr St Clear?'

'But the difficulties only remained until the moment for intervention arrived, then I was able to intervene.'

'But they took our house.'

'And so filled the measure of their cup of sin. At the same time their plans failed, for I was permitted to find you another home, and also secure their punishment, for which purpose the restraining hand of God was first upon me.'

'I can grasp the promise of the "all things possible,"' said Ernest, anxious for further guidance upon this question which had so exercised his mind, but I want to find my way to the verification of the fact.'

'That should not be a very difficult undertaking. The spiritual is everywhere the

dominant power, and he would be a daring man who would rise to assert the government of mind by matter. The locomotive was first conceived in the mind of the engineer, and then the iron and steel were compelled to give expression to his idea. This cotton which your wife has worked into this elaborate design had no power to resist her will. In the same way fire and water, wind and lightning have been brought into obedience to go and come as man disposes. In the higher region of the mind hypnotism has demonstrated how the lesser is guided and controlled by the greater. Here is the principle operating all around you, and given an Almighty power there is no escape from omnipotent results - "all things are possible" - and Jesus has promised to perfect His strength in weakness. What is needed is that our lives shall be so entirely consecrated to Him that He may be enabled to fulfil His cherished design of coming again and taking up His abode in us, transforming our bodies into temples of the Holy Ghost. And this is the height to which His disciples have to climb before the Christ can claim the kingdoms of the world as well as the kingdoms of His Lord for His own. He seeketh for such to serve Him even now, and oh! with what anxious longings does He appeal to His servants to yield themselves willing sacrifices to such a purpose! Oh, the rewards and victories of such a service! I think of the triumphs of the heroes of the past - John, Paul, Catherine of Sienna, Joan of Arc, Luther and others; of George Muller and the faithful few of to-day. Yet even these did not reach the altitude of faith - they only saw the daybreak and the rising glory of the sun; the full noon-tide victory through the cross of Christ still lies in the future history of the world.'

In his appeal he carefully guarded against personalities, but his voice quivered with pathos, and his eyes looked with longing eagerness into the far away. Ernest, however, could not lose himself in such unconsciousness, but heard and interpreted every word as being personally directed to himself. As St Clear finished speaking Pawley rose to his feet, and, crossing the room, offered his hand to his friend.

'Mr. St Clear,' he said, this is the fourth time we have met, but I do not know you, am more perplexed to understand you every time we come together, but of this one thing I am certain, I shall never cease to thank God for your acquaintance. You have done far more for me than any other man on earth, and the finding us this home has not been the greatest of your blessings. You have a knowledge of God I wish that I possessed; you speak of Him with an unwavering confidence I deeply feel the need of; and your utterances appeal to me with a power above all others. For some inscrutable reason God has brought us together, and already I am able to rejoice at the causes which have been the means of doing so. If that purpose has been to call me to such a service as you have spoken of, in return for the blessing you have brought us, and for innumerable others with which my life has been strewn, if He will help me, I am ready, through good and evil report, to follow wheresoever our great Master will lead me.'

St Clear had risen to meet him and, as Pawley spoke, the two stood clasping each

other's hands upon the hearthrug. Then there was a pause, a silence full of sacred melody, like the music of an archangel's pen recording that vow of consecration. Then St Clear spoke again.

'God will help you, my brother - must help you, if you will only be faithful to your sacred endeavour. But be not deceived, He will only give after He has tested and found you able to bear the burden of responsibility. We shall not meet again for a while, and then in other scenes, but let me encourage you, whatsoever comes, remember this promise of the Master - "He that overcometh and keepeth My words to the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father. And I will give Him the morning star." Till we meet again, God bless you both.'

In the holy fervour of his benediction his face appeared to glow with a preternatural brightness, causing Elinor's heart to beat with a strange excitement, until she bowed her head in company with her husband. It was only for an instant, but that was enough! When their eyes were raised again they were full of unspeakable astonishment, for St Clear had vanished from between them and they were alone!

'Oh, my lad, where and who is he?' she gasped as soon as she could speak.

'God alone knows, my dear!'

'Is this the explanation of his mysterious sentences?'

'My dear girl, don't ask me anything now! The world has slipped from under my feet, and I know nothing except Shakespeare's mighty truth -

"There are more things in heaven and earth

Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Chapter XXVIII - A Dreamer Of Dreams

Spring passed, and the bright summer died away into autumn, but nothing further was heard of St Clear - no correspondence, no inquiries, no elucidation of the mystery concerning him. It was an ever-fruitful topic of conversation between Ernest and Elinor, but like the famous riddles over which the Greeks vexed themselves and exhausted their ingenuity only to end in speculation, so did the problem of this strange disappearance remain - ever enticing but never resolved. Whatever the ultimate explanation might prove to be, Ernest became increasingly convinced that it would reveal some method of Divine procedure with which not only he, but modern experience generally was entirely unacquainted. He was not superstitious, and with the sincere and profound reverence he had for sacred things, he fought strenuously against accepting the one stupendous conclusion towards which the fact

so clearly pointed. As a working theory of his faith when answering the inquiry of Mr Rose's daughter it was a simple conclusion to arrive at, that angelic ministry might upon occasion be demonstrated, but to admit it as a matter of experience upon the evidence of the solitary incident which had so perplexed him was an audacity he would not dare to aspire to, but preferred to stand with unshod feet upon the sacred ground and wait until the mists had cleared away.

The claims and pretensions of Spiritualism were in no wise unknown to him; in fact, with thousands of other inquiring minds he had given more than a passing study to its philosophy and phenomena, but he had turned aside - however invaluable the undeniable truth might be - from association with the charlatany and lack of all spirituality in the fashionable modern craze, which had already, in its inception, sold itself for gain.

Should the future carry him so far into the domain of the impossible as to establish the certainty of angelic ministry as an actual factor in the eternal economy of God, he could already see how such a service would be divided by an almost impassable gulf from the curiosity mongering phenomena of Spiritualism, which knows nothing of the Bread of Life, apart from husks and chaff, and only chatters in impotence when appealed to for food to satisfy hungering, inquiring souls. At such conclusion he naturally arrived when he contrasted the influences left upon him by the various séances he had attended with the result of his interviews with St Clear - the doubt, suspicion and uncertainty with the striking interventions, almost miraculous, but unpretentious powers and deep spiritual insight which had carried his faith back to the eternal rock where he was safe in 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding.'

Still these thoughts and reasonings which occupied his busy mind as he walked to and fro were only dreams and speculations after all - castles in the air, in the architecture of which he was so expert, and in whose ruined spoliation he had so oftentimes been bruised and maimed. He had to some extent grown wiser in this respect by not placing such confidence in his aerial structures as in the days gone by, and only yielded to the phantasy as a welcome relief by which to beguile his weariness occasionally, while the real attitude he tried to assume was one of waiting, with Newman's soul-stirring hymn-prayer continually on his lips: -

'Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on.'

But these contemplations were, as we have said, the companions of his trappings to and from the city, or when the temporal cares of life were shut out for the time and he and his wife consoled and comforted each other. Other interests, efforts and considerations had also their claims upon him, and the battle for the bread that perisheth had to be waged not for himself alone, but also for those who were dependent upon him. Certainly Harleston and Foxleigh had been removed from his path so that their active opposition was no longer to be feared; but the trial had given him a wide notoriety, and the effects of it were continually returning upon

him. As the days went by he had the continually-increasing consolation that since they had left Dulwich their bread and water had been given to them, but it had been a literal necessity for him to pray morning by morning, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and on several occasions when the family had sat down to their meals the petition had been just as literally answered; and occasionally it seemed as if even this would not have been secured but for the marvellous economy of Elinor, who appeared to have the power of making pence do duty for shillings - she seldom had the opportunity to try whether she could carry her skill to greater lengths. This resourceful housewife presently found herself able to spread her table, and, in a fashion, provide for her family of six, at the rate of one shilling per day, but coals, light and other etceteras had to be otherwise provided for, and every two or three days she found herself running against the stone walls of these requirements with an absolutely empty purse.

The conflict was long, weary and grinding, leaving its indelible marks upon both of them. It was a trial of faith in which the tension was never eased, even for a single hour, but they pressed forward with almost heroic courage. When the flesh was weak and weariness pressed more heavily upon them, they returned to the problem of St Clear, and, remembering the caution and also the promise with which he left them, took courage again and so found an ever-recurring fulfilment of the Divine assurance - 'As thy days so shall thy strength be.'

Through all this period of unsettlement, and also for other reasons which may be easily understood, Ernest made no attempt to associate himself with another church, but visited each as he felt inclined, and occasionally going as far as the recently-opened barracks of the Salvation Army at Starch Green.

Here Elinor formed the first real friendship she had known in London, with a Mrs. Mills, whose husband - a seafaring man - had been absent for several years, leaving her with two little girls, and she was doubtful whether to call herself wife or widow. She was one of those joyous, sympathetic, trusting natures, with the soul of a child in the body of a woman, which occasionally rise up with a monumental apology for Christianity, upon which the arguments of agnosticism and infidelity only throw themselves to be confounded.

Her limited means were scarcely sufficient to make both ends meet with scrupulous care, and yet she never turned a deaf ear to a cry for aid nor refused to stretch out a hand to help the distressed; often - but always secretly - giving or lending in excess of her resources or the dictates of wisdom, when satisfied with the sincerity of the appeal, judged by a peculiar standard of her own, which she affirmed the Lord Himself made known to her, and she had never once been deceived in following it. On the other hand, should her Urim and Thummim say, 'Nay,' she would sorrowfully accept its utterance, but afterwards could not be moved from her determination.

Ernest and Elinor were returning from their first visit to Starch Green,

commenting upon the peculiarities of the service, when Mrs. Mills introduced herself.

‘I hope you won’t think me in any way officious,’ she said, addressing herself more particularly to Ernest, ‘but I really can’t help wanting to shake hands with you. You have done my soul good to-night.’

‘I am glad to hear that,’ he responded granting her request. ‘Are you going towards Acton?’

‘Yes! It’s a long way to come, but I always get something worth the journey, more so when it’s wet than dry. I like the Army; it’s so real, and lifts you up so. I often think their meetings must be something like what those were in the upper room in Jerusalem, when the gifts of the Spirit were poured out. Don’t you?’

Such a lively, sensitive faith as this woman appeared to possess was too rarely met with for Pawley to wish to crush or uproot it, simply because it was clothed in wild and random vagaries. It was no doubt strong and vigorous, certainly refreshing in its wayside sweetness; a flower, perhaps, like the lilies of the field, clothed with a glory even surpassing that of Solomon if it were examined and studied.

‘I am scarcely in a position to express an opinion on that,’ he answered with guarded consideration not to disturb her; I am not so used to Army meetings as you appear to be, and the excitement perhaps disturbed me a little by its strangeness. For myself I should imagine that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost took place amid a most profound silence in which the rushing of the mighty wind was heard. But of course we each have to form our own opinion about it, for since the gift has ceased we have nothing definite to base our ideas upon.’

Now the religion of Mrs. Mills was neither argumentative, scientifically theological nor particularly concerned about details of consistency; it was all summed up in ‘I believe,’ to which she clung with the tenacity of a struggle for life, and for the rest she exercised her faith. To such a woman there was only one thought in Pawley’s reply, and she fell upon it like a gannet diving after a tempting fish.

‘Do you believe spiritual gifts have ceased?’ she asked with wounded consternation. ‘I don’t!’

There was something so emphatic and at the same time so reproachful about the way she asserted this - her manner was as we may imagine Peter’s to have been when he impetuously threw himself between Christ and the soldiers of Rome, and smote the ear from Malchus - that Elinor took a deeper interest in the woman, in the hope that one so firmly confident might be able to guide her through the darkness in which she had so long been walking.

In the result Mrs. Mills promised to call upon Mrs. Pawley on the following afternoon.

In almost every particular these two women presented a striking contrast to each

other as Elinor narrated her recent troubles to her new-found friend. The one simple and credulously receptive, with an almost atrophied power to reason, and a mind entirely fallow of doubt as to the providences of God, yet withal rich as an armoury in Biblical facts, with all the promises brightly polished and ready for any emergency which might arise; the other cautious, diffident and self-contained, with a touch of standoffishness towards strangers, and a desire to test the solidity of the ground before she put her foot down at every new step. At critical moments of her life, Elinor had the stronger inclination to trust to sight in preference to faith, a caution perhaps not void of considerable value as a restraining power upon her husband; but personally she lacked the consolation which might have been the outcome of a more robust faith. In that interview with Mrs. Mills she became for the first time conscious of this deficiency, and by comparison with her friend was enabled to see her own condition and estimate certain of its disadvantages. In the recognition she lost the pride of her habitual reserve, and poured out the burden of her trials with a freedom strangely in contradiction of her usual habit.

From the moment Elinor expressed her wish to take her visitor into her confidence, Mrs. Mills sat in honoured humility, listening to all that was said without any attempt to break the thread of the story, except with an occasional 'Well, now!' as she heard of some deliverance; or, when some incident was recorded to which her memory suggested a parallel, she would murmur a satisfied 'Ah! just like - ' so-and-so. But as the story neared its finish, and the incident of St Clear's disappearance was being related, she became visibly moved to an excitement of rapturous gladness, until she had to give expression to her feelings, which refused to be longer enslaved.

'Well, now, there! And isn't that just what I've been waiting for all along? That is the very thing I should expect to find the dear Lord do under such circumstances! But, dear me - dear me, I don't know why He should let me live to see it! Mrs. Pawley, I could sit where I am and cry my eyes out of my head for joy! I don't know what to do: I'm just like Anna and Simeon must have been when they saw the Lord's Christ in the temple that morning; I could say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes hath seen Thy salvation."

Elinor, being altogether unable to find reason for such an outburst of enthusiasm in the experiences she had related, listened in wonderment to the unintelligible utterance, and then quietly asked, -

'What do you mean, Mrs. Mills?'

'Don't you understand me, my dear? Why, no! of course you don't. But let me tell you. The very thing you have been speaking of I have looking been for and expecting for months past. I knew it would come as surely as I am a living woman, because "He is faithful that promised"; but I little thought, when I spoke to you last night, that through your experience would come the answer to all my prayers! But let me tell you; it was only last Christmas Day as ever was, that I read the precious promise

made by Joel, that in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and when I read it I heard the voice within me saying that those very last days had come. So I fell to praying that the dear Lord would grant me the answer before this year was out; and here it is, my dear, come already, and the year has another two months to run. But oh! I have been unfaithful, and don't deserve it, or I should have known it all last night! Let me tell you. When your husband went on to the platform to speak, I said to the brother sitting beside me, "Now we shall hear something, for whoever that man is, he's a prophet."

'Whatever put such an idea into your head?' asked Elinor, though not at all displeased at the opinion her friend had expressed.

'Because I saw the mantle of Elijah wrapped about his shoulders.'

'The mantle of Elijah?'

'Yes. Indeed I did. I saw it as plainly wrapped around your husband's shoulders as I see the fire in that grate. Don't you know that the Lord gives His children this spiritual discernment sometimes? Oh, my dear, the day of spiritual outpourings is not past, and if you think so you have a great deal to learn yet.'

'It was because I saw that mantle that I came to speak to you, but I hadn't faith to dream of how much more was hanging to it. I'm very, very grateful, but like the Centurion, I'm not worthy of it, and I don't know why the dear Lord should do so much for me.'

The sincere humility of the woman touched Elinor and produced an effect no argument could have secured. She saw in the simple, unaffected confession an illustration of the unquestioning faith of which St Clear had spoken, and she also then vividly apprehended a desirable condition he had associated with it, in order to lift it up into its legitimate region of omnipotence - a definite, intelligent conception of the design of the kingdom.

Yes, God was indeed good. The acquaintance of her newly found friend had already been a blessing to her, and if she could only make that simple, unwavering faith her own, what might it not produce?

From this time Mrs. Mills became a frequent and welcome visitor, and not only Elinor but her husband also found much spiritual advantage in the association.

The winter set in with sudden severity, and Pawley, materially below par by the tax his fortunes had made upon his constitution, speedily fell a victim to the trying weather with an attack of bronchitis, from which the doctor gave no hopes of his recovery until the warmer days returned. Such a pronouncement filled him with the most gloomy forebodings, since with his inability to reach the city every available hope of supplies was at once cut off, and it was absolutely impossible for the family to be nourished on faith for a whole winter. On his last visit to town he had received a sovereign for a small commission, but it was already mortgaged to the extent of

several shillings, and with the extra demands owing to his sickness, not even Elinor's well-developed system of frugality and economy could make the remainder last for more than a week.

So far she had kept up a cheerful aspect, but when her last penny was gone she found it very difficult to think of the morrow complacently. 'I am trying not to worry,' she said, burying her head in the invalid's bosom, and breaking into tears, but this is more than I can possibly bear. I did not mind so long as you were well.'

'Don't fret, my darling. God has already delivered us from a greater extremity than this. He knoweth what things we have need of, and if we can only bear the strain in some way or other, we shall find He will provide. We have enough for to-night, and He will give us our daily bread again to-morrow.'

Then they prayed for strength to stand the trial of their faith, and slept.

Elinor's nights were periods of broken rest just then, and she was up betimes in the morning that she might get through her work early in order to attend to the nursing of her husband. The top had been lifted from the stove, and the kettle, already singing, was drawn back, lest it should boil before the postman came, though from where the letter would come with an imagined enclosure she had not the faintest idea. But there was no other conceivable way for the help to come of which she stood so desperately in need, and though she knew the postman was not due for fifteen or twenty minutes, she had already been twice to the front-room window to see if he was in the street.

Then Mrs. Mills came.

'It's no use, my dear, I had to come - had to come the moment I was up, and never stopped to make the fire. How is Mr. Pawley?'

'I think he is a little easier this morning, but he has had a very restless night.'

'Poor, dear soul. I do hope he will soon get about again. Now, let me tell you; but I know you will laugh at me, for I've had the most curious dream you ever heard, and I've had to go and get Mrs. Soulsby up before I could come to you.' At this she took a small parcel from under her cloak and laid it upon the table. 'I was dreaming about you all the night, and just before I woke someone told me to get up and bring you half-a-pound of white Berlin wool and half-a-crown. You would know what to do with it. Did you ever hear such a thing in your life? But I had to do it, and there's the wool' - handing over the packet 'and here's the money.'

Elinor had to sit down to save herself from falling, but she was some moments before she sufficiently recovered to reply.

'It is far more than a curious dream,' she declared. 'It is one of the most direct interpositions of Providence I have ever met with; it is almost more wonderful to me than the disappearance of Mr. St Clear. Surely "He knoweth our thoughts from afar off!"'

‘Why, of course He does, my dear! Didn’t you know that before? I did!’ she answered in incredulous surprise. But what is it that so astonishes you?’

‘I was wondering in the night how we could possibly get through Mr Pawley’s illness. While he was so restless I was turning over every way I could think of for earning just enough to carry us on; but I could think of nothing except I could get some wool and crochet some babies’ bonnets that I could put in the window and try to sell.’

‘Well, now! Did you ever! The dear Lord told you what to do, and then asked me to bring the wool and money for the trimmings. That is the way He makes us to be workers together. He knew I couldn’t make the bonnet, and He knew you couldn’t get the things. Oh, Mrs. Pawley, if we were only as faithful as He is we should be happy people!’ Then she suddenly jumped to her feet, and began to pace the kitchen, clucking like a hen calling her chickens together. But ‘awks-a-mercy - why, of course it is! What a stupid woman I am, to be sure - and here I went and nearly forgot to think about it, when the dream and all your thinking was only the second part of it. Oh dear, me, I wonder what the Lord sees in me to have anything to do with! It was only the other day as ever was, when a lady from the Gardens asked me if I knew where she could get a hand-made wool bonnet from for her baby. Now, I wonder who she was? It’s too early now, but as soon as I’ve had my breakfast I’ll go from end to end of the Gardens but what I’ll find her, and I’ve got faith to believe I shall bring you the first order.’

Was it her ready obedience to the heavenly voice that secured this reward of her faith? Who shall say but she returned to tell Mrs. Pawley that she had been commissioned to submit the bonnet for approval. It was not finished yet, however, for the money, after providing trimmings - only ribbon for strings and ornamental bows - had left Elinor sufficient for breakfast and something in reserve, and before dinner time she was the owner of five shillings additional, which Mrs. Mills considered to be a fair price for the bonnet.

Elinor could scarcely believe the evidences of her senses as she invited her friend to come upstairs and tell Ernest the good news, and Mrs. Mills, encouraged by her first success, came back again and again, until Elinor had made and sold half-a-dozen samples of her extremely pretty millinery, by which time the attention of a buyer in a West-End establishment had been drawn to the work, and Elinor was at once liberally subsidised for the winter, and all immediate anxiety was over.

Chapter XXIX - O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?

Dr. Jordan, the medical man in attendance upon Ernest, was a kind-hearted fatherly practitioner, one of the old order now dying out and giving place to the modern grave and reticent faculty man who has a dignity to preserve. As Jordan understood it the art and practice of medicine was not confined to drugs,

compounds, the colour of a patient's tongue and state of the pulse, but it also found no small amount of indirect assistance in accomplishing its purpose - perhaps at times even more than medicine contributed - in the bestowal of sympathy, consideration and encouragement upon those who ministered to the invalid. In the days when he walked the hospitals, humanitarianism held the position to which vivisection science has succeeded, and common sense had not yet begun to follow the intricate hobby of cultivating germs and the relative merits of bacterial inoculation; but men and women lived quite as long in those days though they may not have died quite so scientifically. But the old school was more directly interested in life than death, and so long as it could prolong the former gave little thought or consideration to the latter, apart from keeping it at bay.

So it happened that as the winter deepened and Pawley's malady refused to yield, but rather increased in spite of every endeavour to the contrary, the doctor began to feel an uneasy concern not only in his patient, but also in the indefatigable little woman upon whom the burden of care was pressing with an almost intolerable weight. He had shrewdly drawn his own conclusions from indications around him that means were not sufficiently plentiful for Mrs Pawley to secure clerical assistance in nursing, but he did not imagine that the wool work he saw so continually in her hands was the only means she had of supporting both invalid and family, and had need to be pursued in addition to all her other trying duties. Had he known this he would have been more reticent than he was in commanding her to put up her 'fal-de-dals,' and get as much rest as possible, in order to preserve her strength for the demands her husband was sure to make upon it.

Elinor did not, could not, explain her circumstances, but mutely laid her work aside until he had gone, and was careful that he did not see her so employed again.

Still Ernest showed no signs of improvement, the congestion increased and a serious inflammation caused the doctor to look very grave. Sympathy for Elinor had gradually developed into a very paternal feeling, and as long as he could honestly find any hope he spoke cheerfully and encouragingly to her. But at length he could do this no longer, and on leaving patted the hand he held in his own affectionately, though he could not say what he knew he ought to tell her.

His silence terrified Elinor, who was by no means ignorant of her husband's serious condition.

'What is it, doctor?' she pleaded.

He had to speak.

'I was just thinking - I will send him a draught at once, and run in again at mid-day to see what effect it has produced.'

So he extricated himself from the dilemma, but it was at the expense of reproaching himself all the morning for not preparing her for what he knew must come.

There was no apparent change when he called, either in the patient or in his own courage, but when he looked into the anxiously fearful eyes of Elinor he had to say something though it was like driving a sword through his own heart.

‘e’s very bad - very bad; still, while there is life there is hope, you know, and we must hope for the best. I’ll run in again presently.’

As he stepped into his carriage he caught sight of a woman pale as death dreamily leaning for support against the still open door, but he had not courage to return to her assistance. Only God can help such souls at such a time.

Love wrestled with grief and won the victory. The doctor’s words only had one design - to prepare her for the worst. The sands of the life in which her own was blended were running low, she must rouse herself to help him in his departure. How could she do it? and yet it was the imperious demand of love. She was strong, and if her love was as real as she professed, she would be brave to endure its martyrdom, to suffer the most exquisite agony it is possible to experience with a placid face, firm voice and, if necessary, a smiling confidence, until the sufferer had been deceived into his dreamless sleep, and then - Ah! who can tell what succeeds when the hand of death raises the floodgates and gives freedom to the long-suppressed agony; when the first quivering lightning shaft of loneliness tears through the soul, crushing, destroying and uprooting all the past, save memory, and we wildly fight around only to realise that the one hand - stronger and more responsive than all others, to which we have never yet appealed in vain - lies cold, helpless and unresponsive before us. Who can tell the awful terror of such a moment?

Such a vision rose before Elinor as she closed the door and went back to her husband’s room in companionship with the consciousness that she had to prepare to face it.

‘God help me,’ was all the prayer she had strength to gasp.

The eyes of her husband met her own in mute appeal as she entered, but by a first heroic effort of self-repression she was outwardly calm and showed no additional sign of the new anguish that now consumed her.

Tenderly and quietly she rearranged his pillows to give him the added comfort he experienced from continual change of position, took his emaciated hand within her trembling grasp, and leaning over kissed his forehead lest her lips meeting his should impede his laboured breathing.

‘God bless my lad. How gladly would I give my life if I could only secure you some little relief.’

She could say no more; even so far she had ventured too near the precipice - another word and she would have crashed over the brink of self-control. She turned her head, then rose and hurried out of the room, scarcely trusting herself to say, ‘I am coming back,’ as she hastened to send one of her boys to ask Mrs Mills to come

round for a little while.

It was close upon the hour of midnight. The doctor had recently arrived upon his fourth visit, and Mrs Mills, who had generously offered to sit up, stood beside the bed, watching but not attempting to disturb Elinor, who knelt in a half swoon of grief, clinging to the now unresponsive hand of the dying man. Slowly the tide of life ebbed like sluggish neap yielding to the moon's attraction until the restless ocean for the moment seems to stand, and even the wary eye of the doctor was unable to say when the spark flickered into oblivion. Presently, however, he gave Mrs Mills a significant nod, not trusting himself to speak, and she, bursting into a flood of sympathetic tears, embraced the still immovable Elinor, and coaxingly said, -

'Come away, my dear; he is far beyond our reach and help now.'

'No - no! Hush-sh!' she answered in a voice that sounded far away. Hush-sh! Let him sleep! Let him sleep I'

'He is fast asleep now,' said the doctor, tenderly.

'Come away and rest, so that you may be better when he wakes.'

'I cannot leave him,' she whispered, her eyes wild and glaring. 'He will miss me and wake again.'

'I wish to God he would,' replied the old man, 'but that sleep is not so easily disturbed. Whoever falls into that sleep is always safe until the morning.'

Still Elinor knelt and watched - watched and failed to notice the change, because the numbness of death had fallen temporarily upon her senses.

'Come with me,' said the doctor to Mrs Mills; let us leave her alone a while. Perhaps she may recover herself and find her tears. If not, I pity her poor children.'

Quietly they left the room, but Elinor knew it not, for her soul was wandering through the corridor of heaven's hell in search of her other self.

Ten minutes anxiously ambled by to the listening twain who could hear nothing but the lingering kisses she lavished on the now ice-cold hand.

There was a pause! A start! A scream-

'Doctor! Doctor! Where are you? Come here - come here! He is not dead - he is not dead!' They rushed to her summons, but before they reached her she had fallen senseless upon the floor.

'Poor child!' he exclaimed as he raised her head, 'it is an awful blow, and no one can mitigate it. We may sympathise, but all the same she has to bear the pain alone.'

Then lifting her in his arms he carried her into another room, where he laid her upon the bed and administered restoratives.

When he could leave her to the care of Mrs Mills, he withdrew to the adjoining room to give some little attention to the body before rigor mortis had taken place;

and as he proceeded to lay the hand to rest which now hung over the side of the bed where Mrs Pawley had allowed it to fall, the sympathetic practitioner held it in a friendly clasp for a moment, as if in saying a sorrowful farewell. As he held the hand in his tightened grip he felt - or imagined that he felt - a slight muscular movement incompatible with death, and yet the facts of the case were so conclusive as to forbid the entertaining of a doubt. Every symptom and development of the disease, the process of dissolution so well known and carefully observed, the aspect, condition and change of the body, the silent pulse, all these were evidences incontrovertible, but yet he applied his hand to the region of the heart in confirmation. This however did not explain the muscular movement of which he was just as equally confident. Again he examined the body, opened the eye and touched the pupil, drew out the tongue and tried to irritate the palate by means of a feather, but without effect. Still, in defiance of his triple assurance, the ghost of his hallucination refused to be laid, and he sat beside the bed in an attempt to bring his disturbed mind into some system of order. Did his sight as well as his touch deceive him for as he watched the hand before him he was presently convinced he saw a slight movement of one of the fingers. Impossible! Then what was the meaning of this vagary of his senses?

The prospect of his reflections was not an enticing one, but fortunately he was relieved therefrom by a startling blow at his professional assurance. The hand he had lifted and laid across the breast did unmistakably move and presently make an effort to reach, as if to relieve, the throat. The surprising phenomenon shattered the theories of his craft and experience, but the old man breathed a deep sigh of relief and hurried away to assure the weeping woman that her husband was not dead.

The providences of the Lord are stored in the secret recesses of His own mystery. Again and again in our experiences are we brought to the mouth of this impenetrable cave into which the issues of our lives are conducted for amalgamation with the future, but we ourselves are forced to wait without, to watch the coming forth we shall not understand. God knows the purpose, the design and the possibilities of those secret operations, and like a careful husbandman, full of solicitude for the welfare of the grafting he has just accomplished, binds up the juncture with ligatures of secrecy until the union is complete. But we behold the resurrection of ourselves, and grieve and wonder at the change, not knowing the mind and purposes of the Father. He understands, we walk by faith; He knows the end from the beginning, but we are scarcely able to grasp the beginning when we reach the end; He designs and proceeds to carry out, we fear and in our ignorance should frustrate were He not Almighty. At best we can never do more than look upon His works 'through a glass darkly,' how then can we fully understand the glory that sometime will be revealed when we are able to stand in the shadowless light by which we now are blinded?

We are led thus to reflect while we pause preparatory to making an attempt to follow Ernest Pawley through one of these providential experiences, without an insight into which we shall be unable to apprehend the secret of his future career. How

often times are even life associations broken because we miss the vital point in some crucial event in the history of a friend. We came to the parting of the ways in mutual confidence and good-will, we parted in the evening with the old fraternal wish, we met with an invisible presence standing between us, which explanation failed to exercise, and the old relationship was never restored again. Let us try to avoid such an issue with Pawley, and by a reverent attempt to gain an insight into this strangely abnormal episode, at least prepare ourselves to suspend prejudices and follow his career in the hope that whatever doubts may linger around our minds may ultimately be cleared away, and the providences of God lead us, it may be by a path of lesser suffering, towards the fulfilment of our hearts' desires - the consummation of our ideal of truth.

As his fight for breath and physical inability to maintain the effort increased, his mind became singularly clear and all its powers quickened. He not only remained conscious of all that transpired, but was equally cognisant of the silent sympathies and concern of those around him - particularly of his wife. The slightest pressure of her hand was felt, but he had no power to return it; the agony of her grief was known, but it did not disturb the quiet and dreamlike rest into which he was so pleasantly sinking. Once he did attempt to rouse himself to give her one final kiss, but he was already too far away, and yet he knew the effort caused a tear to manifest itself, which she interpreted aright, and he felt her responsive salute. He was sinking so comfortably into rest. His breathing was growing easier, and the relief was so grateful, his only fear was that something would intervene to disturb and call him back. Down - down! Nothing but an ever-increasing peace enfolding him - no thought but still to fall into the hitherto undreamed of repose. At length he had fallen beyond the reach of time and care and sound, where he lay upon the bosom of a fragrant silence, and the soft dews of eternal and infinite love bathed his weariness away. He was too content even to open his eyes, though well aware that the glories of his dream would be enhanced thereby. He was perfectly conscious, but outside himself was only cessation, and he did not wish it otherwise until a hand, more soft and tender than his wife's, took hold of him and gently carried him away. With what exquisite pleasure did he float upon that enchanted air! It was already heaven, and his overpowered, enraptured soul would gladly be content to stay at any point, and still he willingly proceeded with his unknown, unseen guide, yielding to the impulse still restraining him from opening his eyes.

'Only another instant, then our last difficulty will be over,' said a soft, musical, encouraging voice, which, though unrecognised, had a pleasantly familiar sound.

While he wondered at the voice he sank upon the heavy perfume of a floral couch, which at once saturated him with strength and energy.

He opened his eyes, and beside him, still holding his hand, stood St. Clear, and a host of unknown friends who bade him welcome.

'And is this death?' he asked with incredulous astonishment, as his eyes wandered

over the inexpressible beauties of his surroundings.

‘No, my brother,’ replied St. Clear - which designation it will suit us still to retain - taking a seat beside him as if intent upon a talk, you have now learned the fallacy of that one idea, and henceforth will be the better able to appreciate the prophetic utterance which one of your poets, with a slight adaption to our position, has sung: -

“There is no death! What seems so is transition.

Earth’s life of mortal breath

Is but the suburb of the life elysian,

Whose portal men call death.’

This transition you have at length been enabled to pass through, and now you know from experience that of which he so truthfully sung by inspiration. In the event you have not lost your consciousness, have experienced no blank, nor in any wise changed your identity, and you will presently return carrying the knowledge you have gained to help you in your further labours and duties. The providences of God in your series of afflictions have been the pathways by which He has led you to this sisterdoor of death, through which mankind may enter the eternal and link heaven and earth consciously together. There is a path through the realm of sleep leading to the open door of immortality, and those who diligently seek shall find it. Superstition and the suppressing influences of a would-be completed revelation have closed and sought to bar the door against re-opening, but it is one of the Father’s rights of way and no man or creed has power to prevail against it. By this door Baalam entered to learn the will of God concerning his answering the summons of Balak; Solomon came by the same way to receive his reward of wisdom; Joseph of Nazareth entered by this path into the presence of God and was counselled to carry the child Jesus into Egypt away from his enemies; it is the old prophetic door by which the proclamations of Jehovah were transmitted to men; and among those of later days who have discovered it Emanuel Swedenborg became a frequent visitor. The hand of God endeavoured to lead the Wesleys hither, but they refused, choosing rather to abide by the traditions of men, but now the fullness of time has come for God to further manifest Himself, and the door has been thrown wide again through which you have entered to learn “that the truth of the Lord abideth for ever,” that “the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be and there is no new thing under the sun.” Your sickness has been the means to this end, and your troubles were but the way to the sickness. From where you stand now you are enabled to turn round and see something of the providences of God, so that when you return - and we cannot keep you too long - you may be able to encourage and strengthen the brethren by the mercies and grace of God which is here made manifest in you. Having by the aid of your affliction been thus able to overcome the primary difficulty of our intercourse with you, we can maintain it, and with increasing frequency bring

you hither and further instruct and assist you. For the present I must ask you to come with me so that I may stimulate you for the future by allowing you to read an interpretation of the past.'

Upon this he rose and Pawley followed him into a magnificent building of palatial proportions, which lay behind his couch and thus escaped his previous observation. Passing through a grand corridor filled with objects of admiration and interest he would be pleased to pause and examine, St Clear led him into a stately apartment suggesting a combination library and museum and directed his attention to a most beautifully-constructed model, surpassing all powers of description, which Pawley instantly recognised as a panoramic representation of his own life.

He was considerably left alone to contemplate the wonderful revelation, self-interpreting and readily enabling him to dissect, analyse and trace every incident in his past career and form a correct estimate of the part each isolated event had played. He saw the extent and hindrances of his many errors, at times revealing providential interpositions to avert destruction, at others exposing a full result of a neglect of duty or indiscreet impetuosity. Now he was able to trace a victory springing from the undercurrent of a long-forgotten trial, but in every stage of its progress displaying the watchful care of an ever-gracious God. As he looked into its intricate mechanism, and saw with what matchless skill the threads of his apparently disordered life had been manipulated, in the wonderful design he now beheld, his soul was filled with gratitude, reverence and humiliation, and with a frank and unreserved consecration he resolved in the strength the sight afforded him to henceforth yield himself to the service of God in body, soul and spirit, which was his just and reasonable sacrifice.

The thought of the future drew his attention to the still incomplete condition of the model, and he yearned to catch a glimpse of what had yet to be, but over this a mysterious veil was thrown which he had neither power to remove nor pierce.

While thus engaged St Clear returned.

'There is no need to hurry now,' he explained. 'I have moved your hand and so relieved the anxiety of your friends.'

'Moved my hand! What do you mean?' he asked with as near approach to consternation as he could reach.

St Clear smiled pleasantly.

'I am almost afraid you will find the things you do not know will overpower you until we are better acquainted and you recognise what a shadowland the earth is under its most favourable conditions. Do you forget my argument of the manipulation of matter by spirit, and the illustration of your wife's crochet cotton, when I last saw you? Your body at present is the tenantless residence of yourself, and in your absence, in order to prevent undue anxiety and sorrow, I took possession of it so far as was necessary to move your hand, and so forewarn them that your

departure was only temporary.'

'Is this also one of your possibilities?'

'Certainly it is! The obstacles between us and return to earth only exist in the minds and perversities of men; but this you will presently have to be informed upon - you cannot bear it now. What do you think of the model?'

'It fills me with unspeakable gratitude for the past, and gives me strength and confidence for the future; but that I cannot see.'

'No! That is still within your own hands. There is here' - laying his hand lightly upon the veil of mystery - 'an outline sketch of God's design, but whether that shall be accomplished to the full of His desire rests with yourself. I pray that He will so lead and dispose you. But in the past you may now trace how we have been permitted to minister to your assistance, though unseen, and with this now made plain and the reality of my identity established I hope, as workers together with God, we may continue to be associated, and that this experience will enable you to perform the vow you made when I was with you at home. But come, I must not keep you longer now, but will show you the way back.'

They left the gallery and rejoined the friends who awaited their return. By this time Pawley had become slightly confused with the weight of the revelation which had been afforded him, and gladly availed himself of the couch to which St Clear invited him.

A drowsiness crept over his senses and he was vaguely conscious of gliding again through the fragrant atmosphere by which he had come, but he remembered no more until he felt the impatient pressure of a trembling hand, not quite so soft, but perhaps as loving, as that of St Clear, and he opened his eyes.

Elinor was alone when she received him back again from death. So we will leave them. It is no place for prying eyes.

Chapter XXX - Westminster Abbey

It was a glorious spring day, like a spray of summer well in advance of expectations, and a popular official of the War Office was being married at St Margaret's, Westminster. Such was quite sufficient to account for the brilliant scene upon which Pawley looked as he entered the Palace Square from St James' Park and crossed towards the Abbey.

It was the first day he had been into London since his illness, but the demand for Elinor's work had come to an end, and it was absolutely essential that he should be looking for something to do, even though he was not yet so strong as he wished to be.

He had ridden to Notting Hill and then walked gently through the parks,

proposing to go into the Abbey to rest and also to spend half an hour in one of its historic corners. But the fresh air, warm sunshine and the animated scene induced him to change his mind, so he sat down on a seat close to the church where he could watch the people crowding in to the wedding. Two gentlemen shared the seat, who by phraseology and a dry smoke were easily recognisable as American tourists.

‘Say Hamilton!’ remarked the younger of the two, ‘I’ve been running my eye over this square and trying to figure out how long we should allow this piece of architecture’ (pointing to the church) ‘to disfigure its beauty.’

‘Well, now,’ replied his friend, reflectively, as he rolled his cigar round between his teeth, ‘I reckon it would take about an hour to decide, and say’ (with critical regard to its dimensions) ‘six days to clear it away.’

‘I’ll bet it would have to be well quit in that time if it was in Chicago,’ and, turning abruptly to Pawley, he continued, ‘Say mister, how is it you always spoil your beautiful effects by the introduction or toleration of such incongruities?’

Pawley smiled.

‘Perhaps it arises from a certain veneration we possess for historic association.’

‘That’s just where we get away from you in every deal; we go ahead while you people are considering about sentiment. If we could put a few log rollers under this square and carry it over to our country we would soon show you what Americans care about sentiment.’

‘Then why do you not build one like it, if you admire it so much, without any regard to its historic associations?’

‘That’s a right smart answer, my friend,’ cried Hamilton, fully appreciating the point of Pawley’s retort. ‘I guess he had you that time, Revell.’

The natural freedom of the strangers was far from uncongenial to Pawley, who felt he could spend a pleasant half-hour in their company, and at once abandoned all idea of going into the Abbey for that day.

During the long weeks of his illness he had made a thorough acquaintance with Cassell’s Old and New London, especially in reference to such points and places as he had become familiar with, and therefore he was in a position to follow up his touch of sarcasm with some little accurateness as regards the claims of St Margaret’s for consideration, in one point at least, with especial appeal to America.

‘If you will permit me,’ he went on, when they had finished their laugh at Revell’s expense, ‘I would like to mention one or two associations of this particular church, and ask you whether you would not pause before you demolish it, even though it did disfigure one of your goahead cities. I will say nothing about its connection with politics as being the church of the Houses of Parliament, but go back to the foundation by Edward the Confessor - he whose tomb has made the Abbey what it is. He built this church for the people round about to worship in so as not to disturb the

monks of the monastery in their devotions. No part of the original building is standing now, but portions of the present structure were erected two centuries before Columbus discovered your little island floating like a waif between the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.'

Hamilton gave Revell a somewhat vigorous indication that he noted the mischievous humour of the Englishman, but beyond the faintest trace of a smile Pawley took no further notice.

'On the one side of the chancel lie the bones of William Caxton, the printer, and opposite to this Sir Walter Raleigh was buried after execution in the palace yard. I don't suppose you would be particularly anxious to disturb them - '

'I guess not. Well, we shall have to let the old place stand. But say, you appear to be fairly well posted in its history.'

'If a man has a mind capable of asking an intelligent question,' replied Pawley, it is impossible for him to move about London without becoming fascinated with the absorbing romance of its history and progress; but perhaps I am more than usually enthusiastic about it just at present since an illness has kept me indoors all the winter and I have amused myself in this direction.'

'Do you know anything of the Abbey?'

'I am acquainted with an outline of its history, but for any man to say he is thoroughly acquainted with it would be a most absurd presumption, because in the Abbey lies an epitome of the history of England for the last thousand years - religious, political, court, social, scientific, literary and artistic.'

'Now that does me real good to hear a man speak like that,' replied Hamilton; 'a man who can be modest in his pretensions is the man I am trying to find.'

'And have you had to leave America in the search?' inquired Pawley, maliciously.

'Stranger, you are my best friend in London,' cried Revell, alertly offering his hand. You have got square on him and make it impossible for him to tell the women that you lowered my colours. But, say, are you figuring on the idea that I am trying to tread on your coat tail?'

'No, I never thought of it, but simply answered your question honestly. At the same time I have read Mark Twain.'

'Well, I think if I was looking round for a tenderfoot I should let you pass along. I was counting my checks on the idea that you might be going through the Abbey.'

'I did intend to spare an hour there when I came, but I sat here instead.'

'Then you are not in an almighty hurry. Now let us fix it up right here for you to take us through the place.'

Nothing would have been more congenial to Pawley, but the thought of his ever being able to perform such an office had never once crossed his mind, and

underrating his competence, in the contemplation of how much he did not know of its history, the fragmentary nature of what he did know, and the fear of a hundred questions being asked he would not be able to answer, appalled him, and though both his premonition and desire said go, his diffidence restrained him.

‘I should like to do so, but honestly I am not qualified for it,’ he replied. ‘You will find vergers inside who are the authorised conductors through the chapels and royal tombs, and for the rest of the Abbey, if you have not a Baedeker, you may obtain a guide book at the door, which will be of infinitely more service than I should be.’

‘Look here, my friend, don’t you be so darned modest about yourself; we are willing to fix this matter up and take all the chances on what you don’t know. This is the third trip we have made to Europe, but the women folk have not been here before’ (it afterwards transpired that both were on their honeymoon tour), ‘and I can tell you it costs a pretty round figure before we get through. The authorised guides in your public and historic places aren’t worth a cuss to a man who wants to know anything. They are as full of sass as a buck-jumper, and without a cent’s worth of intellect to rest it on. I’ve been through the royal tombs twice already, but I never heard twenty words the fellow said either time, and I tell you I don’t want our women to have the same experience. Now, in the few words you have said about this church, you have given me more bed-rock information than either guide books or vergers would have done in a whole day, because I have three clear ideas about it that I shall never forget. Now, take my advice, forget you don’t know anything about the Abbey but allow us to go with you while you talk to yourself; our women will learn a darn sight more in that way than all the vergers can tell them, and when we are through we will go and have a bit of lunch together.’

Pawley wavered. The proposition was a great temptation so far as his personal wishes were concerned, but the expedition would take more time than he could afford. He knew not what to say, since his mind hung in even balance, and though he sought for some guiding indication he found none. At that moment Hamilton started from his seat to meet two ladies who had just left the church, and almost instantly the younger, Mrs Revell, came briskly towards him, and without any introduction addressed Pawley with the frank cordiality of an American schoolgirl.

‘Mr Hamilton says you know everything about this wonderful old Abbey and are going to take us right through.’

The eager, joyous expectation so plainly written upon her face turned the scale, and yet he answered, -

‘Mr Revell will bear me out that Mr Hamilton had no authority for saying anything of the kind. I know very little - sadly too little - about the Abbey to undertake any such-like office, but I have a profound interest in the place, and at different times have given some little study to it, so that if you will come with me and allow me to take my own erratic course, I will point out what I do know, but please do not

complain if at the end you are disappointed.'

'Now, that is just real good of you,' she exclaimed. 'You don't know what a relief it will be if only to do it apart from your horrid guides.'

They entered the Abbey, where he invited them to take a seat in the north transept, and by his first words drew them out of the beaten track into the charmed circle of his personal enthusiasm in reviewing the crowd of memories which cluster around its threshold. His vivid imagination breathed upon the bones of the mighty dead lying beneath their feet, and at his bidding the shades of Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Mansfield, Palmerston, the three great Channings, and hosts of others, passed before their minds like the ghosts at Macbeth's banquet. He made that wondrous poem in stone to throb with life, and, as in an enchanted corridor, he led them down the centuries, forgetting that he knew so little, peopling their imaginations with an ever-changing procession of historic personages, now grouped in coronation jubilation, or again with bowed head and funeral dirge following the mighty to their stately couches. Then each vision faded, leaving behind a memory never to be erased.

Art, science, literature, music, religion, politics, the drama, arms and sociology, each received considerate attention and illustration at his hands as he passed the resting-place of those whose names stand aureole-crowned in the niches of history. He recalled the ire of Pope at the rejection of his simple couplet: -

Nature lay hid in Nature's night,

God said "Let Newton be," and there was light - '

as an epitaph for Sir Isaac in favour of 'a beastly Latin inscription which only a few could read;' told how Ben Jonson came to be buried in the nave instead of Poets' Corner; pointed the distance between Fox's grave and cenotaph, and quoted Byron's sarcasm in reference thereto; called attention to Cragg's monument in the baptistery bearing Pope's eulogistic inscription, which was more than falsified before the public had a chance to read it; paused at Andre's memorial, and then lifted a chair aside for them to read the name of the gallant spy upon the tile above his grave; nor did he forget the touching memento to Izaak Walton in the initials of the popular angler scratched upon the monument of his friend Casaubon.

It being Monday the royal tombs and chapels were open to him, among which he found a store of history, romance and legend, after which he led his entranced companions through the cloisters, chapter house and school grounds, equally rich in gruesome, chivalrous and monastic episode.

As a special favour he secured admission to the Jericho Parlour where Caxton was privileged to erect his printing press, and the great chests are still to be seen holding the robes worn by great officers of State in coronation ceremonies since the days of Richard II. Next into the Jerusalem Chamber, where for a full half-hour he thrilled

them with a recital of its historic scenes then to the old Refectory, telling them the story of Elizabeth Woodville, who there sought sanctuary, but lost her sons, who were taken to the Tower. Then passing through the Abbot's chamber, and the door by which all coronation processions enter the Abbey, they reached the nave again, having finished their task.

'Well, now, doesn't that just beat anything you ever heard in all your life?' cried Mrs Revell, as Pawley informed her he could show them no more. 'Why, Mr. Pawley, don't you know that if American people knew about you, you could just pile up a fortune as quick as count, doing just this one thing?'

'I am glad you have been so interested, ladies, but now I must ask you to excuse me, I have been longer than I expected.'

'No sir!', Mrs Hamilton said emphatically, 'you have given me the greatest pleasure I ever had in my life, and you must lunch with us.'

He begged to get away. It was already past two o'clock, and though he stood sadly in need of some refreshment, he had to think about home, and before lunch was over all idea of business would be out of the question.

Still it was no use; he might insist, but his friends were determined. Outside the Abbey two cabs were called, and Mrs Revell taking charge of Pawley, they drove off to Gatti's.

As they were entering the restaurant someone touched Pawley's sleeve, and turning round he found his old friend Cox.

'How are you, sir?' asked the delighted fellow. 'I'm so glad to see you about again. Are you better?'

'Yes, thank you, I am getting fairly strong again now. How are you? Is Mr. Gradeley well?'

'I'm all right, sir; so's Gradeley. Shall I tell him I saw you?'

'Yes, Cox; remember me to him and say I will call on him as soon as I can.'

When he reached the table Revell had secured, he found the three most enviously jealous over Mrs Revell's recital of what she had learned during the drive.

'Say, Mr Pawley, I have a thousand questions I am dying to ask you yet. Won't you come round to the hotel and finish the day with us?' said the younger lady, coaxingly, as they stood at the door. It was just as he suspected - too late now for business, and though he felt not a little guilty half an hour more or less was of little importance now. So he yielded again to the temptation and a few minutes later was sitting in the bay window of Morley's drawing-room relating the historic scenes connected with Charing Cross.

The result was, that, when he insisted on leaving, his transatlantic friends also insisted on his receiving a sovereign to buy some 'gums' for his children; after which

they also prevailed upon him to spend the week with them at the same rate.

They had no conception of it, but such an offer produced a similar effect upon Pawley as his descriptive powers and general knowledge had worked upon themselves. He did not need much persuasion to accept it, and he walked home that night like a man in a dream, not daring to change his gold until his wife had seen it.

Elinor was the first to trace anything like a design in what both regarded as a direct interposition. Then she reminded him that when first he discovered the Old and New London, one particular volume was open at the story of Westminster Abbey, and with what had since transpired it would have required greater powers than Ernest possessed to persuade her that the incident was not prophetic.

On his arrival at Morley's on the following morning Mr Revell introduced him to another gentleman, to whom he engaged himself for the next week, and so it happened from that chance meeting in the Abbey churchyard that an independent business sprang up which seldom left him an idle day during the tourist season for the next six years.

Chapter XXXI - The Submerged Tenth

When Pawley reached the end of the first season in his new vocation he was able to congratulate himself upon the considerable improvement in his position and prospects. His new employment was altogether beyond the interference of the Foxleigh and Harleston brigade, and its success rested entirely with himself. That he was in no way proficient in his knowledge of London was never for one moment out of his mind, but he had formed a definite plan to remedy his defect, and hoped in the course of time to reach even his own ideal standard. In the meantime he had been through the metropolis with many tourists who had done Paris with Stickney, and Rome with Forbes, and the testimonials he had received, comparing him most favourably with these well-known conductors, were eminently satisfactory. Still he was not satisfied, and if his present scope of information had elicited such warm commendations, he smiled to think of the things that would be said in the future.

In one way it was most unfortunate for him that only for half the year anything like constant engagements could be looked for, though from the beginning his remuneration had been sufficiently liberal to allow Elinor to make anticipatory provision for the winter, and this supplemented by her own work, which the acquisition of a maid now enabled her to resume, and Ernest's occasional employment, made them able to get along comfortably, even while he pursued those branches of study of which he found himself to stand most in need.

One of his most urgent necessities was a practical study of the social problem and the whole question of the lapsed masses. Again and again during the summer had inquiries been made respecting this aspect of London life, and he had been

compelled to acknowledge but a most superficial acquaintance with the problem which had such a lively interest for preachers, statesmen and philanthropists alike; while the many-sided and diverse points of view taken among his *clientèle* demanded that he should enter upon his inquiry with a free and open mind, honestly to ascertain the causes, conditions and prospects of these people without reference to party politics, religious fanaticism or purist fads.

It was an unofficial and unprejudiced inquiry, in which he spent years and formed his own conclusions upon the evidence afforded and results obtained.

He was fortunate at the very beginning of his quest to make the acquaintance of the Rev. T. Whitmore, of the Whitefield Mission in Drury Lane, an agency employed with quiet unobtrusiveness among the classes he wished to reach, and doing a work the extent of which only the Great Assize will be able to reveal. Mr Whitmore's proved to be just the hand he needed, leading him across the threshold of the inquiry with many cautions and words of wise counsel grounded upon many years of practical labour. Then the door was thrown wide open to Pawley's investigation and he found himself within the Lazar house of moral leprosy.

In the mission room a regular noon-day service was held all the year round and was always fairly well attended - not from any religious motive, the leaders knew their congregation too well to be led astray by such a fallacy, but it afforded an opportunity for an hour's quiet rest, in many cases a comparatively comfortable sleep, and the chance was taken to scatter some little seed of the kingdom during the time of their quiet leisure. From November to March inclusive - just the time when Pawley was introduced to the work - a free dinner was added on alternate days, children at noon and adults an hour later, and, on these occasions, when the only ticket required for admission was that of destitution, the capacity of the room was always taxed to its utmost, and unfortunately many had to be sent away empty.

It was in this library of suffering where Pawley studied the partially-written biographies of men and women who through unrighteousness - and we use the word in its political and social, equally with its religious, bearing - had fallen and still were falling into the oblivion of depravity. Side by side with these were criminal volumes - vile, foul, deadly - the product of generations of crime in some cases, from which almost all traces of decent binding had long since disappeared. There they lay in ragged, battered and torn confusion, filthy and loathsome, piled in a heterogeneous heap of refuse in a chasm of depravity, having fallen over the edge of rectitude - lost! Some of them had come like brilliant meteors from the firmament of sociology, leaving memories and broken hearts behind, but not another trace by which either sorrowing or repentant friends could follow in an attempt to restore them; hurtling masses of humanity, with souls still as intrinsically precious in the eyes of God as those of the white-robed throng around the throne; social, moral, spiritual accidents and monstrosities lying in festering corruption and practical abandonment, poisoning the atmosphere, and spreading a social and moral plague.

For the thousands of accidents occurring daily in our streets, courts, workshops, manufactories and elsewhere, civilisation and humanity constrain us to provide instant ministry by means of hospitals, surgeons, doctors, ambulances, nurses and every requisite for immediate mitigation of the evil. All that is necessary, all that is possible is done with an unstinted hand, and the burden of maintaining such institutions is borne willingly by a people who holds itself morally responsible for such provision. Should some oversight or negligence result in any scandal of non-provision in case of accident or necessity, a storm of indignation at once arises, and our outraged humanity provides against the possibility of its recurrence.

The advance of science and knowledge has made it patent to political economists that national prosperity is largely bound up in the welfare of the individual, and the whole administrative force of the legislature has been called into operation to protect the physical well-being of the people. Stringently-enforced sanitary laws have assumed guardianship over our health, the factory acts protect our youths and women against excessive employment, tyrannical child labour has been abolished, isolation is compulsory in cases of infection, the State demands an opportunity for intelligent progress by providing a free education and today the air is full of cries for the better housing of the working classes, improved facilities for travelling by the artisan, and care for the aged. So far has the advance of the last century carried us forward in these physical reforms that if the men of a hundred years ago were to return England would be an almost unknown country to them.

Then why, if all these things have taken place in the domains of civilisation and politics for the welfare of humanity, has the Church stood still and made no practically-determined effort to relieve a moral condition which is a thousand times more horrible, revolting and debasing?

We know full well the howl of unrighteous indignation that will rise in chorus against such a designated aspersion, and in order to answer it at once will state it.

This problem is one that lies for the greater part outside the legitimate sphere of religion, and first demands the attention of the philosopher, politician and employer of labour, each and all of whom are far more competent to deal with the matter than the Church, whose duty is pre-eminently a sacred one altogether apart from secular. So far as the Church has a right to interfere she has done so - she has held commissions of inquiry, worked out elaborate schemes of relief, established and still supports various missions, but fails to make any headway or reduce the extent of the evil. We admit the fact of its existence, loathe the depravity, and constantly pray for its removal, and we can do no more, being utterly powerless to put an end to it. Therefore the charge brought against the Church is unfounded and libellous.

If some optimistic prophet had arisen with the dawn of the nineteenth century and sketched the programme of its achievements, just such another cry of incredulous impossibility would have been hurled against him, and had we then lived our voices would have joined the chorus. Ought we not then to learn some

lesson of humility, take some note of courage from what has been done, and look forward with even greater faith and expectations to what the future has in store for us?

This is a legitimate sphere of action for philosophy, politics and commerce, and each may claim to rule in its own domain, neither have we any right to regard the Church as being simply the equal of either in its special province. That is certainly not her place. Christ is Lord of all - philosophy, politics, commerce and whatever other departmental division we may create for the purpose of simplifying the course of life - and the Church of Christ is the steward He has left in charge to guard and protect His interests until He returns. The existing state of society had its origin - no matter when or where it took place - in unrighteousness - wrong-doing; and the continuance and increase of the evil is due entirely to the pursuit thereof. Evil and wrong-doing are the works of darkness, and Christ was manifested, and called His Church into existence to destroy them. She has not only the right but also the direct command to put an end to evil wherever she may find it. It is her prerogative to keep philosophy, politics and commerce pure even as she is commanded to keep her own garments undefiled; and thus the evasive excuse of jurisdiction vanishes.

Neither is the difficulty of the assumption of her vacated authority so great as may be thought if she only has the will to put it into execution. All she has to do is to put her own house in order, purify her own courts and jealously guard the approaches thereto. This means nothing short of a revolution - drastic, complete and effective. Here lies the stumbling-block and the stone of offence. To secure a divorce between the Church and the World, to bring to an end the amour to which she has sold herself for gold and position, to induce her, as a repentant prodigal, to cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow, would verily be to shake the earth to her centre. But it may be - must be done before this crying evil of our generation can be ended. Let her drive hence again all those who seek her courts to buy, sell and get gain, overthrow again the tables of her money-changers, and get rid of the thieves and banditti who oppress her, and return to the pristine simplicity of the teachings and life of her Lord. Let her write over her portals again the golden maxim - 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you do ye even so unto them,' and enforce it as a well-ascertained principle of life bearing fruit in those who seek to come in to her communion, and she will thereby put an end to evil in every department of life. It is no use to ask in reply, 'Why then did she not do so before?' When she threw herself into the arms of Constantine, glad to escape from her bitter persecution, she had not the power she is capable of wielding to-day, but her reluctance and failure to use this influence against her paramour and on behalf of her Lord is the secret of her true impotence.

The admission of the impossibility to lift up and redeem the submerged tenth is a terrible acknowledgment of the loss the Church has sustained. It brings back again

the assurance with which the Master warned His original disciples – ‘Without Me ye can do nothing,’ and compels us to contrast our condition now with the experience of Paul - ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’

‘All things are possible with God,’ and if the Church is willing to get rid of the Foxleights and Harlestones who, like barnacles, not only impede her progress but destroy her foundations, and make her the laughing-stock and ridicule of honest men, she may find that there is not one single case in all the socially putrid, pestiferous mass known as the lapsed classes beyond the reach of speedy restoration. To say otherwise is to affirm that Christ is not able to save to the uttermost, and that His gospel is inadequate to the redemption of the whole world.

Of all the mass of refuse carried day by day to our city dust-yards, there is nothing void of value or that does not pay for reclamation. Gems, bank-notes, title-deeds are frequently recovered, and after these a host of salvages of lesser worth, until latterly even dust has assumed a commercial value upon which a working profit may be made. If this is true of the refuse of the dust-bin, what of the debris of humanity in which God has enshrined immortal souls?

The story of these people with the duty of the Church in relation to them is graphically portrayed by Christ in His parable of the man who fell among thieves. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho lies along the highway of our commercial system, where the priest and Levite still pass by on the other side. It is the good Samaritan - he who loves his neighbour as himself - he who has heard his Master say, ‘By this shall all men know ye are My disciples, if ye have love one toward another’ - it is for such a one to come along for whom the victim looks. He will come because ‘God will have all men to be saved.’

The Church will arouse to recognition of this presently. There will come an awakening - a midnight awakening! We flatter ourselves that the daybreak is at hand. It is not so. The Church will be startled presently with the midnight cry – ‘Behold the Bridegroom cometh!’ and she will open her eyes to discover that in fleeing from persecution she threw herself into the arms of her enemy and seducer, yielded to his entreaties, put off her beautiful garments, robed herself in the fashions of this world, lost her purity, her heritage and her power, and through the long night of her unfaithfulness has lain in his adulterous embraces. But the Bridegroom cometh! And oh! what a reception awaits the Prince of Peace! Wars and rumours of wars and the Church praying for the success of the sword; nation striving against nation in the greed of commercial enterprise, and the whilom ambassador of peace applauding the struggle. The hand of man raised in unrighteous strife with his brother in the war of Capital against Labour, and the Church refusing to interfere because the oppressor carries the bag; and down below - maimed, ruined, bruised, broken - a submerged tenth dying uncared for and unheeded. What will the Bridegroom say? Will He not turn with loathing from the miserable harlot and give His affection to another? Will the infidelity of His absence gain the confidence and

the commendation of His righteous presence? Will He who is ready to leave the ninety and nine to go after the one that is lost accept the excuses of her who has been so often warned? He to whom Ratcliffe Highway is as precious as Belgravia, the Seven Dials on an equality with Mayfair, and the Borough possessing the claims of Tyburnia - He who knows no respect of persons but is righteous in all His ways - will He accept excuses and pardon the infidelity without punishment? The reckoning will be a terrible one when He arises to avenge the oppressed and give deliverance to those that are bound. And the day must come.

When this time does arrive, the Church, in honest contrition, anxious to carry out her long-neglected duty, will adopt Christian methods of pursuing her labours. She will discover that the work of salvation cannot be done by proxy or deputed missions, by drawing-room meetings, bazaars, subscription lists or any kid-glove association. We do not use such methods of extricating sufferers from the ruins of an explosion, the recovery of men from shipwreck, or to relieve the mangled in a railway collision! Help, instant, immediate, personal and effective is required, and the first man at hand does his best until other assistance is available. We may shrink and sicken at the horrors that we encounter, but humanity rises superior to personal feeling, and the attempt to rescue a single life banishes all thought of sentimental fastidiousness.

The Christ way is the only way by which this salvation will have to be brought about - and it has to be done. He did not attempt to save the world by proxy, deputed mission or subscription; He gave Himself, and the Church will have to do likewise - the whole organisation will have to adopt this as a living principle, requiring as, a *sine qua non* of membership, 'that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' This will at once cut the one great Gordian knot and, by purifying her members, prevent the injustice in every walk of life which is the chief source in creating this great depravity. It will dispense with the need of subscription lists, and every professing Christian will become an active missionary in the field.

Far be it for us to say, or for one moment to imagine, that there is no sin, guilt, or responsibility for their condition among the fallen. This is admitted. But they are down, and the way to begin their reclamation is not by recriminations. In commencing our labours we have to take them as we find them, not asking how they came to be in such conditions but rather, how we can get them away - good Samaritans, ourselves, our everything at their disposal for the time, as well as our guarantee for the future. In the history of Pawley we have read the record of the way by which many have gone down. If we have love for the Master, as we profess, we shall show it by our love for the brethren, always remembering that 'inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye did it unto Me.'

If this method of dealing with the submerged tenth was practically inaugurated, what would be the result? Imagine every professed follower of Christ taking one of

these outcasts and being responsible to God for his or her rescue. If it is true that he that saveth one soul is greater than he that taketh a city, the experiment is worthy of a trial - far better than attempting to raise a million guineas - for the value of only one soul who can estimate it? Suppose such an effort to be made as a novel new-century mission. Christ has promised that all things we ask of the Father in His name shall be given unto us. Can anything be more in accordance with His will and mind than this - could any greater boon be bestowed on earth? Every professed follower of Christ to take one member of the lapsed masses and be responsible for his or her salvation and restoration. God would help us, the mission could not fail, and by the time it was over where would the submerged tenth be? Gone, lost, wiped out!

It is possible - 'all things are possible to him that believeth.' It needs no committee, no guarantee fund, no organisation save consecration and determination. Why cannot it be done?

Pawley made the experiment upon such of the driftage of life as came within his reach at Drury Lane, and the result filled him with hope and courage. The men and women naturally divided themselves into two groups - the criminal and the fallen - and each had to be dealt with separately and peculiarly. But it was surprising to find how approachable they were as soon as they had confidence in his intentions. Silver and gold he had none to give, and it was at very rare intervals that any hint at such relief was made. Sympathy was more to them than money, and an occasional honest companionship for an hour was an oasis of pleasure in the wilderness of their suffering not to be despised.

When the dinner was over and the company gone, Pawley would sit with two or three - sometimes half-a-dozen men; at other times women - around the mission-room, fire, chatting over the news of the day, or any other congenial subject, always as ready to listen as to be heard, and avoiding the introduction of religious topics himself. If others referred to them he was pleased, but he never pushed them obtrusively forward. Their methods and habits of life, experiences and means of living, and the strange episodes each had to recount were all full of interest, and useful to him. In these talks items of information would occasionally drop unguardedly, and be carefully treasured until he could piece them together and establish a clue which he was not slow to take action in communicating with friends, by which means he restored three men during the first winter. The majority, however, he found to be more guarded and cautious not to discover themselves, and Pawley sometimes found his ingenuity severely taxed in gaining the confidence of individuals upon whom he had set his mind. He had spent much time during three months upon one man before he could consider he had made the slightest progress, but in the end he succeeded, and his ultimate redemption proved to be one of the brightest gems in slum labours.

Yes, Pawley satisfactorily solved the problem to his own satisfaction, that these

fallen ones may be reclaimed with faithful and patient work. In the City to-day there are several positions of considerable importance held by men who have been down, and might have died there, but they bless God for the helping hand of Ernest Pawley.

In the course of time he had no little cause for congratulation in reviewing his work among the criminal classes. Shrewd, sharp-witted, and with a suspicion that every stranger may be a detective in disguise, the habitual criminal does not readily give himself away; but on the other hand, a friend who can be trusted is most invaluable to these social pariahs on occasion, and not a few of these hunted ne'er-do-wells discovered that they might put such confidence in Pawley. Gradually he learned the whole freemasonry of the fraternity - calls, signals, pass-words, hiding-places and rendezvous - and was able to visit places where few would have the hardihood to venture.

This not only gave him frequent facility to secure a willing return of stolen property, apart from a reclaiming influence he wielded, but enabled him in his secular work to visit those dark sides of London life which afford such a keen interest to visitors; and for years he passed through these scenes of vice and crime without the slightest trace of inconvenience, except on one solitary occasion.

He had been since ten o'clock visiting different features of night life, in company with an eminent New York divine and his friend, and about two a.m. passed through Short's Gardens on his way from Drury Lane to the Seven Dials. This was in the old days, before the gardens had been reconstructed and the 'two-penny rope' was still a popular institution there.

Always conscious that it was possible to meet with someone in these haunts to whom he was unknown, Pawley regularly took the precaution to advise his friends to leave him in case of accident, and make their way to the nearest public thoroughfare if there appeared to be any doubt or difficulty. On this occasion, as he was describing the nature of the locality, a man darted from a doorway and seized him by the throat.

'What the h -- do you want here?' he demanded. Pawley lifted his hand significantly to the fellow, who loosed him.

'Don't you know me?' he asked.

The fellow tested him by a word Pawley did not understand, and thinking the sign was but an imposition, was about to close upon him again.

'What's yer got abaat yer?' he asked. 'Now, look sharp, an' let's 'ave it afore I calls me pals.'

For answer Ernest gave a peculiar low cry, at hearing which the man stood back, and a dozen men were instantly around them.

'What's up, sir?' inquired the first man, who instantly recognised him.

'Nothing to be alarmed at,' he replied quietly. 'I was passing through the gardens with these two gentlemen, and your friend stopped us, not knowing me, I suppose. I

just called you that he might know it was all right. Good-night!’

‘Good-night, sir,’ chimed a dozen voices. And as the visitors walked away they heard a volley of fierce oaths discharged at the luckless fellow who had dared to interfere with a friend whose help he might be wanting to-morrow.

Chapter XXXII - Piccadilly

It is natural that a man should feel the greater interest in that part of his work producing the best results, therefore while Whitmore laboured most indefatigably among the classes to which we have already referred, he made no secret of the fact that he much preferred to give his attention to the rescue of fallen women, on whose behalf he used the upper part of the mission premises as a rescue home, under the sympathetic management of Mrs Smith as matron.

There are few men who are really qualified for successful work in this direction, and judging from the outward appearance and manner of the man, one would not be disposed to give Whitmore anything like a prominent place among the few. The objection would lie in a pronounced hardness of manner in approaching a stranger, alike forbidding and liable to raise a spirit of opposition rather than induce penitence in a woman. Those who knew him best understood how much this deplorable mannerism misrepresented the man, who was painfully conscious of his thorn in the flesh - often, but vainly, besought its removal, while by all efforts to conquer it he only succeeded in making it the more apparent. But his God was not unmindful of his supplications. There are times in the lives of these fallen women when Fortune’s face is turned away, when they are held in the grip of fears even worse than the thought of their first fall. They stand in need of assistance, the help of a friend in whom they can trust, but know not whom to turn to. At such crises the door of their rescue may easily be opened, and Whitmore possessed an almost unerring faculty of discovering these seasons and taking their advantage.

He was a man relentlessly exact in his stewardship. Perhaps it was well God had not given him a too extended field of labour, and limited the number of beds at his disposal, since an empty one reproached him, and he would rather search the streets in vain for the whole night than go home with the knowledge that he had a room for an outcast unoccupied.

‘Mrs Smith tells me that she has two vacant beds upstairs,’ he said to Pawley one afternoon. ‘What do you say to a turn in the Haymarket to-night with a view to filling them?’

‘Nothing would give me greater pleasure. I want an introduction to that part of the work.’

So it was arranged, and the two met in Mrs Smith’s cosy sitting-room at half-past eleven o’clock to have a cup of coffee before their midnight ramble.

The night was cold, especially after the warm room, so buttoning their overcoats they crossed the Lane and walked briskly through Long Acre, Whitmore taking Pawley's arm and giving him some idea of the work before them. The winter offered considerable advantages for entering upon the practical study of this, to him, new phase of London life, since the throng of unfortunates was, at such time, not more than one third as large as it presented in the season, giving him more time and opportunity to study and become acquainted with individuals.

At the corner of St Martin's Lane the missionary stopped abruptly.

'Do you see that girl standing at the opposite corner in front of the gin-shop?' he asked.

'Yes'

'Don't let her see you looking, but she's simply a lamb among wolves.'

'Do you know her?'

'No! But I soon shall. Come with me, as if you were going to the Dials.'

At once he started across the street, leaving Pawley to follow.

The girl was still standing on the edge of the footpath, path, as if doubtful which way to go, and evidently did not notice the stranger's approach.

'What are you doing here?' he brusquely inquired.

'Minding my own business,' she answered, 'and you can do the same.' At the same instant she turned and walked up Long Acre.

Taking no notice of the rebuff, he was at her side in a moment.

'I think your business is mine just now. I am a minister. Where are you going?'

'I don't know,' she answered more softly when she heard who he was. 'I have no friends in London, and only came here to-day.'

'Have you any money?'

'No!'

'Then come with me; we will find you a bed for the night. I will leave you with a lady who will take all care of you.'

The girl thanked him, and ten minutes later was being suitably provided for by Mrs Smith, having met with a providential salvation.

Her story was not a long one as it afterwards transpired. She was a farmer's daughter from Northamptonshire, who had ran away from home that morning because her father had married a young woman and the two could not agree. She had reached London with only tenpence in her pocket, under the impression that she could get into service at once and so be provided for. Her mistake was discovered when it was too late to rectify it, and but for the guiding Providence which placed her

in Whitmore's charge must almost certainly have fallen hopelessly into the vortex. As it was her father was communicated with next day, and after a second night in Drury Lane she was glad to go back home.

Having successfully accomplished so much of their purpose, the two again set forth and reached the Haymarket before its first busy aspect was over.

Circumstances have since moved the centre of this deplorably wonderful concourse from the Haymarket to those parts of Piccadilly and Regent Street abutting on the Circus, but the facts, the purposes and the wilful blindness of England, as a nation, to the existence of the scandal are just the same. It has gone on night after night, year in, year out, with an unbroken record, since the closing of Ranelagh Gardens; a midnight promenade patronised and frequented not only by peers, statesmen, military officers and the *elite*, but a goodly sprinkling of clerics as well; a wholesale market of lust in which fashionably-attired women, whose number is to be told by thousands in the season, parade their attractions for lure, tempting morsels for the lascivious eyes of men whose lewd tongues openly discuss the terms of proposed adulteries, while the harlots balance their personal attractions as equivalents for the price they claim.

France and America laugh at the incredible existence of such a glaring moral - or rather immoral - wonder, without a parallel in any other city in the world; the Mohammedan, Hindu and other 'heathens' discuss it as one of the peculiar and debasing features of Christianity; the Western cowboy and the miner from the Antipodes guardedly inquire whether the 'queer stories' they have heard on the plains or in camp have any foundation in fact, and, if so, where and when the sight may be seen; but England is not yet conscious of the significance of this hell upon earth.

She understands the danger of a horde of Arabs sweeping through the Soudan; rushes to the rescue and assistance of a company who seeks to force an unholy traffic in China; hastens to sacrifice thousands of lives and a hundred and fifty millions of money on behalf of the political grievances of men we have never known; her soul revolts at the thought of, and rests not until she has suppressed, an inhuman suttee in India; but for the prostitution of London alone - let us leave the rest of the kingdom as representing a horror beyond our powers of estimate and comprehension - which woman for man out-numbers the Uitlander of the Transvaal, England has no practical thought, no sympathy, no consideration, no knowledge.

Let us not be misunderstood. The charge we bring in the name of God and humanity is one of apathetic lack of interest and organised practical effort to deal with the evil as it is to be contrasted with our action as a nation in the cases mentioned above. And in bringing the accusation, the noble efforts of the Salvation Army and other rescue associations, nor the earnest endeavours we occasionally receive from the Press, are in no way forgotten. All honour to every individual soul who in any way reaches out a hand to save, but each of these only increases the

condemnation of the State that shrinks not from annihilating a republic for a political grievance, but wilfully persists in not recognising the presence of a canker-worm that is gnawing at our own heart.

We know the answer that will be fretfully and contemptuously returned: 'The evil is as old as civilisation and has baffled the powers of earth's greatest intellects to deal with. How then are we to be held responsible for its continuance?'

Such an answer is a sophistry, not an argument; a quibble rather than a valid justification. England poses before the world as the premier Christian nation, and as such she professes to believe that there exists a Power and an Intellect above that of man, a God who 'is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think,' a Christ who 'is able to save to the uttermost.' Is this a truth or a fiction? Is it an ascertainable fact, or is it only an imagination? If the verbal claim of the church is true, prostitution is an evil capable of being uprooted, and its continuances only another monumental testimony to our departure from the faith.

Who are these women who have thus fell among thieves, and whence came they? They come mostly from the lower-middle and upper-lower classes - we are here speaking of the Piccadilly exhibition, and leave the higher as well as the lower representatives of the fallen classes outside our consideration for the moment - they are the bone, sinew and muscle of desirable motherhood. The entrances by which they are more numerous introduced into their depravity are: first, from behind the counter of our bar-rooms; next, from the ranks of underpaid shop assistants and overworked sempstresses; and yet again victims to the ungoverned lust of nominal Christians in our homes.

On each of these, and all other sources of the traffic, the Church has a governable and preventable grip if she chooses to use it. If without fear or favour she would outlaw the man who was even suspected of association with either of the causes until he could honourably and fully prove his innocence, the supply would speedily be put an end to and the evil die out. That she does not so reasonably and practically assert herself stamps her as an accessory for which she will have to answer at the audit of her stewardship accounts.

But pending the corporate action of the Church, which, though it must come, still lies in a very indefinite future, what are the prospects of success in individual efforts?

Let us follow Pawley and gain our answer as well as an insight into the working of this traffic from his experience. One case will well illustrate our purpose, which, save in an abnormal incident which will readily be discovered, is an average instance of the whole class.

After his first experience with Whitmore, Pawley preferred to take his own way, and readily induced his wife to further his efforts by receiving a girl into their family, where she could be protected, counselled and assisted until such time as she could

be restored to her friends or reasonably be recommended to a situation. But Elinor did not lose her interest in them when they left her home; week by week she wrote and thus continued her friendship and practical anxiety in their welfare, and presently had the satisfaction to see two or three of her protégées happily married while others were restored to families or happy in various situations.

‘What!’ cries someone, in holy horror, ‘take a girl from the streets into your family, among your innocent sons and daughters?’

Why not? Is there any better method of securing their salvation than by surrounding them with the pure influences of home life? He is but a poor specimen of Christianity who has not discovered that there is a reverse to the motto of the English garter which reads: ‘He who works with a whole heart for God, God will protect.’ The step that Pawley took in this direction was one of pure faith and God honoured it.

But to our story.

When he had left home in the morning he had said ‘God bless you’ to a young woman who had been several months with them and was about to leave, promising his wife to try and bring back at night another girl he had been cautiously leading towards such a proposition. Fortune did not favour him, however, and as the street began to thin after one o’clock he was reluctantly compelled to make up his mind to return alone that night, and entertain the hope of meeting the subject of his solicitude on the morrow.

As he reached the corner of Air Street in his homeward journey along the Quadrant, he came upon a group of four young women, from one of whom he heard a sob.

He stopped at once.

‘What is the matter?’ he inquired kindly. ‘Can I do anything for you?’

Three of the number cast a suspicious glance towards him, but he was known and recognised by one.

‘He’s all right, girls, you can trust him,’ she said.

‘Yes! I think you may trust me,’ he replied, addressing himself more particularly to the one in trouble. ‘Tell me what is the matter and I will try and help you.’

‘It’s too late now,’ sobbed the girl. ‘There is only the river or the Serpentine left for such as us when we reach my condition. I knew it would come some day; but it’s hard to die so soon.’

‘Hush! you must not speak like that. No extremity can warrant such a contemplation’ - did his mind flash back to an incident in his own experience as he spoke thus? ‘Tell me your trouble; perhaps I may be able to see some way out of it.’

‘You can do nothing,’ she answered, drying her tears under the impulse of a touch

of scornful resentment rising in her despair, 'except to make matters worse. We know very well what is before us. I have taken my chance and now I have to pay for it.'

'That's about all, Nellie,' replied one of her Job's comforters. 'God help you, for we can do nothing. I don't know where to get five shillings if it would save my life, or I would help you. But we shall all be after you presently. Good-night, and good-bye if you have to do it.'

Two of the three thus kissed and took a sorrowful farewell of their distressed companion.

'That was a noble wish of your friend - God help you,' said Ernest, 'for if your case is as bad as it appears He alone is able to do what you stand in need of. Now I am His servant. Tell me what the nature of your trouble is, and perhaps I may be His minister to save you.'

The girl shook her head despairingly.

'Now look here, Nellie, it seems to me that is your last chance,' pleaded her friend, and so if you won't try and tell the gentleman what is the matter I shall.' She waited a moment, but, the girl not speaking, continued, 'She has been laid up for a fortnight with an accident to her foot, and ought not to be out now, but she was a week behind in the payment for her clothes at the time -'

'In the payment for her clothes?' he queried.

'Yes. Do you imagine we own the clothes and jewellery we wear? I wish we did. Half of us would be out of this damnable life to-morrow but for this hiring scheme that keeps us in slavery. They always manage to keep us in debt, and so they hold us. What is it you have to pay, Nellie?'

'Three pounds a week for my clothes.'

'I have to pay five; and it takes all I can do to do it. Do you mean to tell me that you are compelled to pay so much for rent of clothes alone?'

'Yes, our clothing and board are generally kept separate. But five pounds a week is not a great amount for girls who come here - we should have no chance if we were not well dressed. Some pay as much as twelve and even twenty guineas a week. But it's no matter what luck a girl has, there is always some scheme for taking our money and keeping us a week in arrears with our payments. That is how we are held. Two weeks back is the limit. Nellie, of course, was back a week when she sprained her ankle, and has been in the house a fortnight, scarcely able to pay one week's money. Now to-night she has been sent out and told that unless she can pay something in the morning she must go. That means her clothes will be taken away and she will be turned out in such things as she can only go to the East End, in and we would rather jump into the river than that any time. That is just what her trouble is.'

'But there is another way out of the difficulty. Let her come home with me. If you

will do this,' he continued, turning to the grief-stricken girl, my wife will gladly receive you, and we can save you from this trouble and your miserable life as well.'

'That would be a very easy way out of the trouble if it was practicable,' replied the girl; 'but have you noticed a loafing kind of fellow who keeps passing and hanging around?'

'Who is he?'

'The tout of Nellie's landlady; sent out to watch what she does and where she goes. If she went away with you he would follow either on the back of your cab or in another, and before dinner-time to-morrow she would be locked up for stealing clothes and jewellery.'

'But we should have a good answer to such a charge if anyone dared to make it.'

'Would you? I am not so sure about it. This business is carried on like all others - for what can be made out of it - and has its own trade protection society. Everything is carefully arranged to reduce risks to a minimum, I can tell you, and you would open your eyes if you knew some of the persons who draw large incomes from it. This society has its own lawyers, and the case is put before the magistrate not as I am telling you, but in such a way as to make black appear to be white, and we girls are always proved to be the vilest of the vile. It is an easy matter to get policemen to swear away what little character we have left, and show our landladies to be most estimable women, and a conviction is sure to follow. But a term of imprisonment is not the worst of it. When we go into one of these houses we have to give our real names and our home address, which is always carefully, but quietly, verified; at the trial our real names come out as well as our alias, and when the conviction is obtained, some kind friend - you may guess who - sends a marked copy of a paper containing the case to your family. Now do you understand why we choose the river before such an exposure?'

Such explanation opened Pawley's eyes to an enormity of this evil he had never suspected - revealed it to be a carefully-formulated scheme of trade in the bodies - yea, and souls as well - of unfortunate and unsuspecting girls, such as even hell could not hope to improve upon. He scarcely knew how to proceed under such circumstances, but he dare not abandon the girl to her contemplated fate.

'Tell me.' he inquired encouragingly, 'what amount does your landlady expect you to give her in the morning?'

Nellie shook her head doubtfully and left the answer to her friend.

'Oh! If she had been fortunate enough to meet with a gentleman he would have given her perhaps two or three pounds.'

'Suppose he had only given her one pound.'

'Well, she would be grumbled at, but landladies never refuse money, and she would take that on account.'

‘Do you think that would save her?’

‘Yes, it would save her for the time, but she would be sent out early-to-morrow.’

‘Let to-morrow take care of itself,’ he answered, but to-night, Nellie, you must let me be your friend. I have only one sovereign in the world but you shall have it, for I can better afford to give it to you than allow you to drift into any further trouble. If this will save you, take it as from God and remember His ear is always open to your cry. But I shall be anxious to know how you get on. Will you meet me here at a quarter past twelve on Wednesday night and let me know?’

‘Certainly I will,’ answered the astonished girl, as she dried her tears, ‘and I shall never be able to repay you for your kindness.’

‘I knew he was all right the moment I saw him,’ said her friend.

‘You must try to forget this trifling service, though I shall be very glad if you will remember me as a friend; take my card, and should you at any time be in any further difficulties, show your confidence in me by letting me know.’

They parted, each going their own way, but though Pawley’s last words did not convey the impression, he had no idea of losing sight of that girl until he had reclaimed her.

She faithfully kept her appointment with him and reported the crisis to have passed, and for weeks afterwards he met her on the two evenings he gave to that work, until quite a confidential friendship sprang up between them. She knew the evenings he was to be expected and made an effort to keep at least a few minutes at liberty for a chat, and occasionally it extended to a long and pleasant talk. They discovered that both were country born, and one night spent the best part of an hour contrasting town and country life, during which she unguardedly let her real name slip out. She tried to withdraw it, and failing to do so, assured him that she only said it to fool him, because she knew he wanted to know it. On another occasion she, in an absent-minded way, referred to her father, but Pawley was paying attention to a group of boisterous young fellows near and did not appear to hear what she said, much to her relief when she recalled herself.

But her friend knew more than she imagined, and during his walk home pieced his threads of information together and came to a determination.

He knew most certainly that she was not a Churchwoman, and now had a shrewd suspicion that her father was a minister. On the following morning he searched the year books of the various denominations, finding three ministers of the name of Maltby. To each of these he dispatched a telegram, inquiring: -

‘Have you lost a daughter Nellie? If so, wire Pawley, Telegraph Office, Charing Cross.’

In the evening he called to ascertain if his endeavours had met with any measure of success. Two replies awaited him. The first he opened read

‘Yes. Am coming. Meet me, King’s Cross, nine-thirty.’

The second wire was of course in the negative, and after glancing at it he crumpled the form in his hand and threw it from him; but in his joy he read and re-read the first. It brought him such an abundant reward - such a speedy harvest of the interest he had taken in Nellie. It told him of another victim rescued, other hearts made happy, of another conquest for his Master. He could scarcely believe it was true, and he was glad and trusted.

When the girl had spoken of her father, not twenty-four hours previously, Pawley had formed the idea of a man in the prime of life, full of energy, vigour and geniality; but no such man stepped from the train at King’s Cross, and as the crowd cleared from the platform he began to feel more than a little disappointed - afraid that his hopes were doomed to be frustrated after all.

‘Excuse me, but are you Mr Pawley?’

‘Mr Maltby? Yes!’

Pawley may well be forgiven for not recognising such a man - bowed, bleached, broken - as the expected father of the girl he knew. For three full years this Jacob had been sorrowing, searching, praying for the idol of his life, but the heavens had been as brass, earth had been vindictively cruel, and only sorrow had been faithful to him. Not only had his child been taken away, but he had laid her broken-hearted mother to rest in her last sleep, hopeful in his grief that the two had been re-united where partings are unknown, and then the light of life had sank from him into the night of despair. Into this gloom a sudden ray of hope had flashed, and the bewildered, startled mourner was as yet in a perplexity of agitation, not knowing whether to hope or doubt. Every natural impulse of his heart cried ‘Hope!’ every experience of his long search counselled him to Doubt!’ and washed by the current of the dual streams he could only suffer.

Pawley sympathised with him. But what after all if the identity of names should only prove to be a coincidence, and Nellie not be this man’s daughter? The thought was cruel - awful! and as it passed across his mind Pawley simply gripped the other’s hand in a firmer clasp but said nothing.

‘Where is she - where is she?’ was the natural and impatient inquiry.

‘I shall have to ask you to be patient for a little while. I don’t know where she is living, but I think we shall be able to find her presently.’

‘Is she well? What is she doing?’

‘Yes, she is well, or was when I saw her last night,’ He made no attempt to answer the second question; it needed careful preparation and a very tender hand to lay the burden of that new grief upon the dropping shoulders. ‘I hope I have not come to any erroneous conclusion and raised any false hopes,’ he went on with a view of evading that inquiry for the present, but the information upon which I have acted

has been of the most meagre kind, gathered at considerable intervals.'

'You are not mistaken, my friend; I know you are not mistaken. God has at length heard my prayers, and she is my own child - my Nellie! I am sure of it. How long have you known her?'

The question came as a great relief, since it opened the way for him to tell the whole story in his own way, and while he did so he led his companion leisurely towards Drury Lane, where he had arranged to rest and get some little refreshment. It was not the first experience of the kind Pawley had passed through, and when at length he had to make the fearful admission he was quick to add the blessing of her rescue in contrast to what might have been but for the providence of God throwing him across her path at the critical moment.

In spite of all his care and tenderness Pawley saw the new and gaping wound inflicted by the blow, and though he poured in the balm of the mercy of God with all the unction of his consecrated life, the soul of the sufferer quivered and trembled as he was at last compelled to yield supremacy to a phantom dread which had long haunted him.

'How did she leave home?' asked Pawley, with the double object of finding some relief for Maltby in talking and also hearing the history of the case.

It was the old story. Indulgent parents in straitened circumstances anxious to do more for an only daughter than means would allow. An advertisement in a semi-religious paper, the reputation of which was accepted as establishing the *bona fides* of the tempting bait, offering exceptional terms and advantages to a respectable, willing and adaptive young lady as companion. It was an opportunity not to be lost, correspondence ensued, most satisfactory references were given and received, and Nellie left home, father, mother and daughter fully convinced that their dearest wish was about to be realised. For a month she wrote regularly twice a week, glowing accounts of her new home and friends, then came a letter saying she was about to travel on the Continent for a short time, and after that all was silence.

One can easily understand the natural impatience of the father to set out on the final quest for his child, but Pawley knew that he would be doing more harm than good by reaching Piccadilly before the usual hour, and the interval proved to be a most trying time to all concerned. Still, like all things temporal, it passed, and with an excitement impossible to describe, Maltby set out with Pawley towards their goal.

It was not usual for Ernest to visit the neighbourhood two nights in succession, therefore it was no use expecting to find Nellie at their usual meeting-place, and care had to be exercised that she did not see him and his companion first, or the consequences were a foregone conclusion. He knew the most likely places to look, but failed to find or hear anything of her, and after a long and unsuccessful search was gradually coming to the conclusion that she had some appointment keeping her away when one of her friends informed him that she had gone into a certain bar with

a gentleman.

The father's excitement was now almost painful to witness; he breathed in short, rapid puffs, trembled till he was scarcely able to walk, and when he tried to speak his voice was thick and scarcely intelligible.

They reached the tavern and Pawley looked into one or two of the private compartments without finding her, but through the slightly-open door of the public bar he saw her with one elbow resting upon the counter. Taking Maltby by the arm and almost dragging him forward he opened the door and entered.

'Nellie!' and the father threw out his arms imploringly towards her.

The opening of the door had not in any way attracted her attention and she was in the act of raising a glass to her lips when she heard the well-known voice. She started, dropped the glass, the wild pallor of death was dashed across her face, and transfixed with fear she gasped, -

'Father!'

The old man, with arms still outstretched, reeled for an instant, and before Pawley could save him had fallen life-less at the feet of his daughter.

What followed was a scene of wildest confusion - the rush of such men and women from the presence of death, the speechless horror of Nellie, the alarm of the girls behind the bar, the anger of the landlord at the interruption of his trade at such a moment, and the clamorous excitement of the crowd that gathered round the door, are better left without attempt at description.

Two constables carried the body into an adjoining room, where they placed it upon a table awaiting the arrival of a doctor. Pawley directed his attention to Nellie, whose 'gentleman friend' had wisely decamped in the commotion.

After the first effects of the shock had passed by Pawley was conscious of a strange feeling of gratification at what had taken place. He could not understand it, and felt inclined to censure himself for his unaccountable lack of common sympathy, but, try as he would, he had no power to control it, and against himself a feeling of profound thankfulness took a firm possession of him. It was a new experience in which he found himself divided into strangely opposing parts, and that which was ordinarily natural gradually yielding to the other. He was quite himself - apparently even more so than usual - knew every word that passed between the constables, resented the impatience of the landlord, but he felt no sorrow for Nellie nor regret for the lifeless corpse upon the table.

The doctor arrived, made the usual cursory examination, pronounced life to be extinct, and advised the removal of the body.

Then Pawley was compelled by his other self to speak.

'He is not dead, and must not be removed.'

He spoke with respectful authority, apparently as much astonished at his own words as the doctor was to hear his opinion controverted.

Without deigning to make any reply another and more critical examination was made.

‘I can do nothing,’ he said to the sergeant. ‘Who is this man?’

‘I am Mr Maltby’s friend.’

‘Well, perhaps it would be best to humour him under the circumstances. Let it lie an hour or two, if he wishes it; you will be able to remove it before morning.’

Then he leisurely drew on his gloves and left.

Under the strange and unaccountable impulse that controlled him Pawley was assured that all was right, and refused to listen either to the suggestion of the landlord or constable - for one had retired immediately after the doctor - and sanction the removal of the body. He recalled his own peculiar experience, and, in his exaltation, definitely came to the conclusion that at the moment of recognising his daughter the mind of Maltby had reverted to his wife, and in some way, under the influence of the shock, his soul had found that sister-door of death through which he rushed to hear the glad tidings that he had found the wayward child. The thought reconciled him; the conflicting feeling ceased from that moment, and, filled with the confidence of a wrestling faith, he bared the breast and laid his hand over the heart of the - was it dead or unconscious man?

For full an hour he neither moved or spoke. The constable thought the man had taken leave of his senses; the landlord advocated force to get rid of the unpleasant presence; but Pawley took no notice. He had come to the conclusion that God was too merciful to bring His servant so near to the desire of his heart and then dash the cup of joy from his hands before his lips could taste of its sweetness. All the incidents of the day had been conducive to such a collapse, and had he only thought to explain matters to the doctor he was sure he would have counselled patience. God was good, and Pawley’s faith was strong to hold out until something more definite than at present had been ascertained.

The demonstration came. The ministry of faith conquered. We make no pretence to say how, we simply affirm, as an irrefutable fact, that in this instance professional dictum had twice pronounced life to be extinct, but after that self-abnegating faith had its reward and the accredited dead man returned to life.

Nellie also returned to life and home, and the man who saved her had a double reward in connection with her rescue.

Chapter XXXIII - Comparing Notes

We have now reached a point where we may advantageously pause to ascertain

where our story has led us, and the peculiarity of the spiritual phenomena by which we are surrounded. From the time we first met Pawley in that little sitting-room of Shaftesbury Hall, we have been conscious that his feet were treading in strange paths, his mind imbued with heretical ideas, and his aspiration fired with the possibility of ideals which have long ceased to be accessible. Though we have seen him in the Church he was never of it, but rather like a prophet of evil, always raising his voice against the usages and practices of the institution, pressing the liberty of free-will almost into the region of license and refusing to submit to the authority of the elders and fathers. Without being learned in the original languages of the Bible he has set the decisions of councils and orthodox doctrines at defiance, and in their stead given to the world unauthorised interpretations of the nature and being of God, and openly advocated speculative theories in relation to the last things which are both immoral and dangerous. In furtherance of these errors he has not hesitated to attack and traduce acknowledged and worthy pillars of the Church whose consistent lives had given them prominence and authority within the communion, and has generally so conducted himself as to necessitate his exclusion from the fold.

Such is Pawley's present position and estimate from a Church point of view. It is now necessary for us to consider his position from his own standpoint, which is somewhat as follows: -

In an early and perhaps unsystematised search for truth - the discovery of which was equally important to him as to the fathers, schoolmen and divines - force of circumstances confined his studies almost entirely to the Bible. The 'light of life' shone upon its page, enabling the way-faring man not to err, so far as he was able to judge, in the way he travelled. From the book he looked abroad upon the world, and back again to the volume, to discover why the conditions of the people in no way pointed to the fulfilment of the promises, but, on the contrary, in every respect were in the pre-Christian state of strife, discord and spiritual blindness. Had Christ failed - God changed or in any way altered his purpose? He turned and read, 'I am the Lord, I change not.' 'The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not a man that He should repent'; 'Whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it'; and of Jesus he read, 'He must reign till He hath put all enemies beneath His feet,' 'for God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that very tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' If this is not universal and eternal dominion, what does it mean, and why in nineteen centuries has it not been secured when Jesus promised that His generation should not pass away until all was accomplished? In his difficulty Pawley had recourse to prayer, relying on the promise, 'all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive'; and he found Him to be faithful who promised, because the asking was for guidance according to the will of God. The voice behind him answered, 'This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoureth

Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'

So far Pawley was satisfied; from wherever the reply came it conveyed to him a reasonable and logical explanation of his inquiry. His feet were upon the rock of Christ and he sought the continued guidance of that Comforter who had promised to lead the redeemed into all truth. Again he prayed: 'Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path . . . for Thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for Thy name's sake lead me and guide me.' And yet once more he was answered: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me. . . . I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved. . . . My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life. . . . Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

Humbly relying on the strength that was promised, Pawley turned from the busy, crowded and traditional road of the Church, determined to follow the great Heretic in the narrow and less-frequented path. It has been thorny and briar-strewn; by the milestones of persecution and tribulation we have been able to mark the progress made; hungry, footsore and weary we have watched the pilgrim press forward, fearful, at times, lest he should not be able to endure, yet ever looking towards the hills from whence cometh his help. Still, through the clouds and the gloom of his trials, we have seen unmistakable flashes of Divine interpositions in every extremity assuring him that he was not alone; in the presence of St Clear we have witnessed the angels of God encamping round about and delivering him; in the mysterious foregleams of abnormal powers, which have perplexed us as much as himself, we begin to imagine that we have reached enchanted ground and pause to inquire where this path is leading us.

It is well that it should be so. 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and under the shadow of the mountain range of evil, reaching from horizon to horizon, we may well rest while we compare notes.

Let us first make sure that we quite understand what the gospel of Christ is. This may appear to be superfluous to many, but it is better not to take too much for granted in the beginning, or we may find it difficult to come to a conclusion. It was foretold that 'in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it. And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways; and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift

up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more . . . In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted. And I will make her that halteth a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.' Again: 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' Again: 'Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil'; may we not add hereto, not for our sins only *but for the sins of the whole world*? And finally: 'He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet.'

Here is the design, the scope and the prophesied triumph of the gospel of Christ - is it possible that it can be accomplished?

This question is not so irrelevant as may be supposed, when we honestly regard the present state of mankind. In founding His Church Christ declared that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'; but in spite of this it is a terrible and incontrovertible fact that the gates of hell have prevailed, if not to the extent of completely overthrowing, the powers of darkness have been powerful to frustrate and paralyse, until to-day the Church stands hopelessly impotent before the three towering peaks of Evil - the Lapsed Masses, the Criminal Classes, and Prostitution, not to mention the Drink Traffic, Commercial Immorality and a legion of other vices. 'If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.' Did Christ mean this? If so, why - when the Church has prayed herself hoarse in pleading for the removal of these evils - have her cries not been answered? Is it not because the conditional and omnipotent 'If' with which the promise is prefaced has been neglected and despised? No! Then there is only one other reason, and that is because the Church is faithless to her duty; her prayers and cries have only been delusive make-believes,' while in her heart she has not wished or desired to end the disgrace. There is no use fighting to free her feet from the net in which they are entangled, there is no honest third alternative to be found; either the gospel of Christ is unable to accomplish its purpose, or the Church has been unfaithful and lost her power as well as the will to carry it out.

On the other hand, Pawley has chosen to keep to the old paths, and the character is not a fancy sketch drawn for the purpose of a novel. He has been content to rest himself upon the peroration of 'The Great Charter of Christ'; 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. We have watched the gathering, the strength and the breaking of the storm, and the

gates of hell have not prevailed; rather has the heretic triumphed. He has thrown himself, single-handed with his God, upon the strongholds of these three classes before which the Church has pitched her tents, and if his faith has not removed the mountains he has shaken them, and demonstrated the fact that the work may be done, and that his Christ is still 'able to save to the uttermost.'

But his work is not yet accomplished, the day is not ended, the full baptism of the Spirit - given, as St Clear assured him, only as he was tried and found worthy to receive it - has not yet been poured upon him, neither have the promises of the Master been exhausted. There are still accessible heights to be scaled before the full splendour of the spiritual vision is attained and the coronet of his Lord's 'well done' can rest upon his brow.

Chapter XXXIV - Spiritual Endowments

Six years full of interest and incident passed by while Pawley was thus laboriously working, each bringing its own harvest, witnessing its peculiar rescues and gradually accumulating a total of treasure for presentation to the Master, representing a rich surplus of possibility gathered in those hours only too many devote to pleasure alone. More than a score of girls had passed through his own family, half of them on the way from Piccadilly back to the vacant chairs in their own homes, two were married, one had been transferred to where there is neither marriage nor temptation, and the balance, with one solitary exception - a sad case where as yet the flesh was too weak, though Elinor was by no means hopeless - were filling honourable positions, where the secret of the past was unknown. But this was not all. Occasionally in the busy streets Pawley met one or another of three men who in times past had been 'well known' in haunts and associations they had now forsaken, for whose good conduct and faithful discharge of duty he had become responsible - men who turned to look after him and breathe a fervent, unheard 'God bless you' as he parted from them after a kindly inquiry and word of commendation. There were still others in pleasant and comfortable homes he and his wife occasionally visited, where grateful hearts would delight to recall reminiscences of other and darker days when, in the wretchedness of their sin, Pawley had taken hold of the outcast and led him back to home and wife and children.

The battle of life was not all sunshine or affluence to the indefatigable worker. He had a personal burden to carry and a position to retrieve before he could see his wife in the comfortable home from which wrong had thrust her; and the burden was not lightened by the continual additions to his family. But the labour was sweetened by these gleams of sunshine falling across his path, and the contrast of his own lot with that of others ever reminded him that he had been mercifully spared even in his deepest affliction.

Rich and profitable as were these days in reminiscences over which we might

pardonably linger, the purpose of our present task is to find the compensation and the complement of that early period in Pawley's London life, compelling us only to preserve a guiding thread to the days that have yet to come. It may be that we shall return to these beds in the garden of his experience, from which to gather another bouquet of the mercies of God.

St Clear was not seen by Elinor after that eventful night succeeding the trial; neither had Ernest any vivid recollection of him for some considerable time. But about twelve months after his strange experience in the land of sleep, he began to wake in the morning with - not a memory, it was more a consciousness of forgetting something, and the more he endeavoured to recall it, the more it eluded him, though he appeared to touch the fringe of it at every attempt. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the obliterating cloud dispersed, until shortly after the Maltby incident he was able to recollect an occasional meeting with his valued friend in the home of his dreams.

Somewhere about this time a remarkable incident occurred, which to Pawley's mind was like the everlasting doors being thrown open with a confident assurance that no man could shut them for ever more.

He was riding home on the box seat of an omnibus. As the driver was pulling up at the Marble Arch, Ernest heard a voice distinctly say, 'Get off and go back to the Metropole!' It was not a strong and certain conviction flashing into his mind the idea to get off, such as he had frequently known and obeyed as a guiding voice, but the words were clear and resonant as of someone speaking from behind him, and he turned to see who it was. There was no one on the `bus, and while he wondered whether he was in any way mistaken it was repeated in a more commanding tone: -

'Get off, and go back to the Metropole!'

This time there was no room for doubt. He crossed the road and took a bus on the return journey, debating within himself as to what the outcome would be. He was not long left in doubt. The request had been complied with, and as if obedience demanded instant explanation, as he rode back all that was necessary for the time was made known to him, the voice still speaking in the confidential and clear tones of a friend sitting at his side.

He was to return to the hotel named and ask for Mr Selby of Boston, whose room was No. 419, to whom the voice wished to deliver a message. Pawley knew no one of the name, neither did he expect to meet with anyone at that time, for the season had been closed more than a month. Still the occurrence was in itself so abnormal that he could not do other than put it to the test and wait developments.

On inquiry he found the gentleman occupying the room mentioned, and while waiting the answer to his card the voice explained that Selby was about to go to Paris, but must not. A wire was following recalling him home, as his only sister had met with an accident when riding and had been killed. In his rapid travelling the

cablegram had just been behind him for some days, and would arrive in London next morning, also a letter from home containing the news of his sister's death.

It may be imagined with what incredulous astonishment the young man heard the strange message, not knowing whether to regard his unknown visitor as a lunatic or a prophet, a doubt which was only heightened when, in explanation of how he obtained his information, Pawley could only say by a voice.

'This is about the toughest case I have ever met with,' said Selby, and, by thunder, I hope you will prove to be a liar. You are pretty 'cute on my movements, though, and from that I fear your communication may be true - that is unless you are trying to "bluff me."

'You may test that at once,' answered Pawley. 'I am told that the Boston papers have just arrived. See the *Herald* for last Tuesday week, page four, and at the foot of column five you may read the report of the accident.'

This was readily ascertainable, and in five minutes the report was confirmed in every particular, so far as the paper was concerned.

Pawley had reached Notting Hill that night before the thought of riding entered his mind. He was busy with two opposing thoughts: the littleness of man in comparison with the infinitude in which we live and move, and the recognition of it, humbled to the dust; on the other hand, the greatness of the human being, lifted up so very near to the angels, even almost to the very seat of God. How far beneath him, how helpless to influence were the things of earth, as the everlasting arms bore him upwards, and, in such revelations as that he had just received, the voice Divine assured him personally - 'to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.' How real and tangible did the everlasting appear, how frail and transitory the sensuous and temporal.

On the following morning he had a vivid recollection of meeting St Clear and his friends, to whom he expressed his surprise at these things and asked for explanations. The former smiled at the astonishment he evinced.

'New experiences, when they extend beyond our expectations and imaginations, do sometimes perplex and astonish us,' he replied; 'and I would impress upon you the desirability of seeking to understand, as far as possible, what all these portend while yet their occurrence is unfamiliar. The days will come when you will be liable to regard them with complacent equanimity; then they will lose something - much of their instructive force unless you are watchful and guarded. The coming again of the Saviour will not be according to the expectations and ideas of a worldly-minded Church - it will be an individually spiritual coming and you will remember how He said, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." There are valuable and certain signs preceding it by which it may be known and prepared for. In our approach to Him we become more like Him - transformed into His image, until He lives again - this time reigning rather than

suffering in His saints, and the works that He did shall they do also. These in all their fulness are the lessons you will learn, if you are wise, from these new experiences, which are intended to increase upon you if only you are found worthy to bear them. You will remember that prayer of the Holy Spirit when He had finished His work in Jesus and was about to leave Him to pass alone through the soul's Gethsemane and Calvary; praying for His disciples He asked "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." Is it not a glorious thought - as in Jesus, so in us, that the world may believe? Think of this and remember that in His baptism Jesus heard the voice from heaven, then you may learn the significance of your being sent back last night with that mysterious message of which you learned the truth in its confirmation. When the overshadowing Spirit fell upon Jesus it transformed Him from the Carpenter of Nazareth into the Messiah of God, endowing Him with power from on high and making Him mighty in word and deed, and yet He declared, "I can of mine own self do nothing - the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." You will remember when I was with you I spake of the power of spirit over matter and claimed the dominion of all things for the soul. It was there in the Christ - the power of God suffusing the body of Jesus and carrying forth "the virtue" that healed the sick and awoke the dead. Maltby was not dead, but the transfusion of life fluids from you through his inanimate frame enabled us to preserve him from death, just as your surgeons have discovered that by the transfusion of blood the same event may in cases be averted. Earth has yet to learn that faith, with the laying on of hands, is more potent than drugs, and the Church has yet to awaken to the price she has had to pay for her worldly alliance. Go back and ponder over these things in the light of all things being possible to him that believeth, for you have yet much to learn, "but ye cannot bear it now."

So was he led forward step by step, working and watching through the day until the night opened its wonderful revelations to him, and sent him back from the University of Souls to review, compare and understand the 'marvellous light' that was thrown from the beyond upon the fragmentary and incomplete revelation of the mercies and truth of God which we have yet received. All things in very truth became new to him. The duties, opportunities and responsibilities assumed new relationships, fresh standards of judgments were raised, the relative positions of men to each other were changed; in fact, almost a new heaven and a new earth were brought into view, and he stood in such responsible connection with both that he cried with Paul: 'Who is sufficient for these things?'

During all these weeks and months, changes and developments, trials and successes, Elinor found a valuable friend and adviser in Mrs. Mills, whose simple-minded faith not unfrequently triumphed in the management of some of the girls with whom Elinor found it difficult to deal. The confidence and unquestioning reliance of a child is often able to solve the problem that distracts the sage who is working his way through reason back to God; and the practical Elinor often had to

give way and allow her impulsive friend to take the lead. It is always so in true companionship, and such was the relationship between these two women - the one lacked what the other possessed in a sense, and the compensating value of each was alternately revealed. As Elinor reported Ernest's experiences he had to surmount in relation to his rescue work, Mrs. Mills would sit with open mouth and wonder at the head-piece 'he had to make anything out of such bits of nothing, and get at the right end after all;' but when the other was uncertain and perplexed in relation to the mysterious workings of these spiritual phenomena, Mrs. Mill's feet stood upon solid ground and she appeared to know instinctively which way to take.

It was particularly so when Elinor spoke of Ernest's recent interview with St Clear, and the point that had made least impression in a practical way upon the Pawleys was the one their friend seized upon as being the strongest and most desirable.

'Well, now, did you ever!' she exclaimed. 'Let me tell you. It was only since I was here the other day that I was reading the last chapter in Mark; and when I came to the promise of Christ of all the gifts that should be given to His disciples, I said to myself as I read "They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover," Mr Pawley ought to do that, and I was going to speak to him about it. But here you are, my dear, I needn't do anything of the sort, for the dear Lord has done it Himself, and didn't want to trouble me to do it. Oh, He's a wonderful Saviour, Mrs. Pawley, though we don't know much about it, because we are so unfaithful. I wonder, oh, I wonder what He sees in us to make Him leave the angels and do anything to help us. But there I am, talking again, and thinking all about myself while I neglect the very thing He is all the while telling me to do. As she spoke she jumped from her chair and hurriedly began to put on her bonnet and mantle.

'Surely you are not going without a cup of tea,' admonished Elinor, who by this time had become quite used to her friend's erratic movements.

'I must my, dear,' she replied, unable to tie her bonnet strings in her eagerness to be off. 'Oh, if I was only a sailor I am sure I should be swallowed by a whale, for I'm as bad as Jonah ever was; only to think that I've been sitting here talking like this and there's that poor Mrs. Coles mad with neuralgia for five weeks past, and can get nothing to cure her, while the good Lord has told Mr. Pawley to do it, and I don't move to fetch her.'

'You must do nothing of the kind,' Elinor replied in her most emphatic manner. You are the most impractical woman I ever met with, and if you do this foolish thing you will not only vex Mr Pawley but make him a laughing-stock as well. He was only told that the power did exist, not that he possessed it, and I am sure he will be seriously annoyed if you do anything so foolish as you suggest.'

'Oh, my dear, where is your faith?' she remonstrated. Is curing the neuralgia anything to be compared with the resurrection of that poor old man?'

‘But he was not dead, Mrs Mills. Why will you be so stupid?’

‘I know I am, my dear, I know I am. But Lazarus and the widow’s son were dead.’

‘But what have those to do with us?’

‘It’s the same Lord, my dear, and He’s able to do the same things - “They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover.” I believe it! The Lord has showed it to me, and I shall bring Mrs Coles.’

‘You must do nothing of the kind. Besides, Mr. Pawley will not be home till very late.’

‘My dear, I shall test it. I shall go home and ask the Lord about it, and if He shows me I am to bring Mrs Coles we shall be here at nine o’clock and Mr Pawley will be home.’

Either her faith was answered or her credulity prevailed - who shall say which? - for punctually at the time appointed she returned with the afflicted woman, and, contrary to Elinor’s expectations, Ernest had returned and was just taking off his overcoat when the bell rang.

To say that Ernest was astonished is to speak mildly, when between the interjected explanations of his wife and Mrs Mills he came to a confused idea of the cause of such a visit. Had it not been for the presence of the sufferer there is no doubt but that he would have followed inclination to read Mrs Mills a sharp lesson on her impulsive indiscretion, but his heart was too tender to add to such agony as the woman was bearing. Yet the absurdity of the position into which she had forced him demanded that he should protest against it, even though his action wounded himself in his sympathy for the innocent victim, who could well be pardoned for resorting to any means of relief at such a time.

‘To say that I am surprised at your reckless action, Mrs. Mills, is only feebly to express what I feel. You have not only placed me in a most unpleasant position, but you have excited false hope in the mind of this poor woman for whom it is impossible for me to do anything.’

‘Don’t say that - don’t say that you can’t help me!’ wailed the poor creature. ‘For the pity of God do something - anything, or I shall go mad,’ and the contortions she performed in the pain she endured pointedly affirmed her danger.

He wished to say more in the scolding of Mrs. Mills, but feared to add to such intolerable grief, yet he was helpless. If St Clear had only explained to him anything of the process by which relief might be secured he would have risked the ridicule in his anxiety to do something for the quieting of such torment, but he knew nothing. Never was a mariner more hopelessly at sea without a compass than he in this extremity. He could grieve in sympathy, but beyond that his hands hung idly beside him.

At that moment Mrs. Mills spoke to him as if by an imploring inspiration.

‘Lay your hands on her face, Mr. Pawley; just lay your hands on her face, and I have faith to believe the Lord will hear and answer you.’

‘Do! Do - oh! please do something,’ cried the woman.

Pawley could no longer resist. Whether it failed or otherwise it would put an end to the suspense, and get rid of the woman who so disturbed him by her pitiable condition. For himself, he had no faith, but if others had he would do what he could and leave the rest with God.

He took his stand behind the woman’s chair. Mrs. Mills did not look at him, but buried her face in her hands - she was praying, and Pawley recalled the promise that ‘the prayer of faith shall save the sick.’ He had far more confidence in that than in anything he did, and his hope revived. With the tenderness of a child he laid each hand gently upon the sufferer’s cheeks, and as she breathed a fervent thank God ‘a neuralgic pain struck him from head to foot with a force that made him shout. After this a strange sense of exaltation came over him; it was like, yet different to his experience when he saw the vision on his way to Cottominster, neither was it quite the same as when he stood over the body of Mr. Maltby. He was conscious of everything - of the magnetic passes he felt compelled to make, or the alternate quiet resting of his open hands upon the cheeks; but his sight was quickened to see a purple cloud of pain rising from the head, and he knew that his efforts were succeeding.

After some ten minutes of anxious silence he was the first to speak as he withdrew his hands and walked away from the chair.

‘You are better now,’ he said confidently.

‘Thank God, it’s gone.’ exclaimed the joyous woman. ‘I knew you could do it, Mr Pawley; the Lord told me so!’ cried Mrs. Mills.

‘I did not do it - I did nothing; not even believe,’ he answered with sorrowful humility.

‘But if the vessel had not been clean the dear Lord had not used it. Ah! Mr Pawley, “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.”’ Then in true Army fashion she burst out singing, -

‘I’ll praise my Maker with my breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.’

Each of the others naturally joined in the song, and at its conclusion Ernest poured out a prayer of thankfulness for all the wondrous mercies of God, especially the signal favour they had just received.

‘Now!’ said the jubilant Mrs. Mills, as they rose from their knees, come along, Mrs. Coles, let us go and tell what great things the Lord hath done for us, whereof we are glad.’

‘I hope you will do nothing of the kind - or rather I hope you won’t mention my name in connection with it,’ requested Ernest.

‘The dear Lord has not so poured out His spirit upon you that you should hide its light under a bushel,’ she answered. ‘Do you think we should be faithful in the land of our captivity if we did not tell of the prophet in Israel? Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, body as well as soul; here is the sign, the proof, the proclamation of it, and woe is me if I keep silent and do not make known the tender mercies of our God.’

She had disarmed him. Already his doubts were returning, and he was discovering numerous reasons for, and explanations of, what had taken place - excitement has a wonderful influence upon nerves; the mesmeric passes had soothed the pain for the present; it is a well-known fact that toothache ceases and takes its departure as we near the dentist’s. All these and others Ernest recollected and accepted, but he dare not mention them before Mrs. Mills, whose armoury of Scripture quotation would be again opened upon and silence him. Still he was most anxious to find a way of escape and keep her tongue silent.

‘There is no doubt about it, God has been most gracious to us to-night,’ he replied cautiously; but it may be that He has only seen fit to grant a temporary relief - ’

‘Oh don’t, say that,’ pleaded the alarmed woman.

‘I hope it will not prove so, but His ways are past finding out, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Therefore we must not be too premature in coming to a conclusion, and though we must be grateful to Him, we must be careful not to bring Him into contempt in our haste.’

‘Let me tell you,’ interposed Mrs Mills. ‘For the sake of others the dear Lord won’t hide the truth too long. So I shall ask Him if this is not cured to let Mrs. Coles feel it again before breakfast in the morning. I know she won’t feel it, but I will ask this of the dear Lord to satisfy your Thomas of Didymus’s heart; and then when she don’t feel it I shall be here again to-morrow with someone else.’

It was no use arguing, her faith was rooted in experience rather than reason - though perhaps that was the more profound reason - and it could not be shaken, and the following night Pawley had not one but two cases to operate upon. He rebelled at it - would have run away had he the faithless courage to do so, but he could not. Again he secured the victory, and day by day he went on until the accumulated

evidence overpowered his scruples, and in spite of his prejudices he was compelled to acknowledge the indisputable facts.

Mrs. Mills took every precaution that the tidings should not die out, and much to Pawley's regret - for he still retained a deeply-rooted antipathy to the work - inquiries for his assistance rapidly doubled upon him, and the responsibility he felt prevented him from refusing his requisitioned aid. It seriously interfered with his ordinary duties, and strictly conscientious in refusing any fee or reward for his services, he looked forward with apprehension to the coming summer. So far his patients had been mainly confined to the working classes, but the maladies he treated were ever increasing in number though nothing appeared to be invincible to his power, always provided he felt sympathy with the patient; but if from any reason unexplained he felt a prejudice to anyone he was powerless even to relieve a headache. This was a strange but invariable rule he was afterwards compelled to acknowledge and accept.

Presently he was consulted by a minister - a returned missionary - whose daughter was afflicted by epilepsy, and a prominent physician had certified that her case was incurable and she must be placed under controlling care. Pawley consented to see her, after which she had no return of fits, much to the consternation of her medical adviser, and shortly afterwards returned to her scholastic duties. This case brought him under the notice of the profession. Several critical cases were closely watched, with the result that he was offered a handsome sum for his exclusive services. But the man who had refused fee or reward from his patients was not to be subsidised by the profession.

This positive refusal to lay his spiritual endowments upon the altar of Aesculapius proved to be in a measure annoying, since a system of irritating espionage was established with a view of bringing him within the powers of the law as an unqualified practitioner; fraudulent representations were made to him by persons who asked his assistance for imaginary complaints - but Pawley smiled at the fruitless endeavours. Not only had he the keen and watchful protection of St Clear and his friends behind him reading the thoughts and intents of all who consulted him, but a very curious safeguard had also been developed within himself by which instantly, on touching a person, he could feel in himself all the symptoms and accurately diagnose the malady. This gift of psychometry presently assumed such a sensitive reliability that he was able to read and advise on cases at a distance, in relation to which he had the satisfaction and joy of experiencing a revival of the peculiar phenomena recorded of St Paul in the Acts. 'So that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them.' With such precautions thrown around him, the spies suborned to accuse him of charlatanry went away convicted and confounded. Others attempted to entrap him into prescribing simple remedies where the patient could not be brought nor he had time to go, but since his method of treatment did not even require the assistance

of dietary, he was safe and passed unscathed through the trial.

At first he only saw such as came to him in the evenings, but the number grew until, when he returned home from town, he found his house like an overcrowded waiting-room in a hospital. Then he added two afternoons a week to his new and financially unremunerative labours. But the more time he gave the more his fame spread, until, at the end of twelve months, he found the whole of his time not only occupied but far from sufficient for the demands made upon him.

At this stage there was a personal aspect of his work that caused considerable concern, not only to his wife and immediate friends, but also to those who had cause to thank God for the remarkable powers which had been so fully poured out upon His servant. Every treatment he gave made a considerable drain upon his own vitality. At first this was not so discernible to others, but he was conscious of it even in the case of Mrs Coles, though he failed to understand more than that it left him with a sense of fatigue. It was not long, however, before others noticed it, and frequently he would faint from exhaustion after treating several, or sometimes even a single case more than ordinarily severe, such as cancer or paralysis. When this was observed it was natural that pressure was put upon him in order to protect so valuable a life from being needlessly thrown away, but he would smile at the anxiety of his friends and confront them with the problem as to how he should draw the line of distinction - upon what principle should he decide which cases to accept and which to refuse? Were not all equally the children of the Father, the brethren of Christ? And why so anxious about his own welfare? Suppose, for the sake of the argument, the work that had been given to him did shorten his own life by ten years, and in doing that he was instrumental in prolonging twenty others for only five years each - already his positive cures numbered far beyond the hundred - would not those ten years be well spent at nine hundred per cent profit? So he argued and went on working.

But the full occupation of his time interfered with his income and he had to make his choice between the discontinuance of his labours or a return to the hardships of his early days at Acton. The decision was not a doubtful one, especially as Elinor was as clear in regard to his duty as himself. To make sure of the matter, however, he presented it to St Clear, but this was a step in which he could offer no advice; whatever was done must be of Pawley's own free-will and unaided determination. St Clear knew too well the influence his wish would wield, and his knowledge of the law of God would not allow him to assume the responsibility of advising either way. Still Pawley's faith was not entirely dependent upon his friend. He had another behind St Clear in whom his confidence was strong - an adviser who spoke to him in no uncertain voice, saying, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you; then the question was finally settled and Pawley began to prepare for another descent into the valley.

First his valuable collection of books relating to London went, bringing him only

pence and shillings where he had paid shillings and pounds to acquire them, but they were useless to him in his new vocation, and bread was necessary. After these everything he could possibly dispose of followed in a continual stream, but he murmured not as he went hopefully, loyally forward. Many wondered - but no one knew - how they lived in those days, for neither he nor Elinor said a word, though he heroically refused all offered fee or reward. Then the end of his resources came and he was compelled to fall back upon the arms of faith. God knew what things they had need of; it was for Pawley to do his duty - the rest was God's concern. He did it; and for nearly two years it would be impossible to say how they struggled through. It was literally God who provided, but their bread and water proved to be sure, and most mysteriously their rent and taxes were paid.

Then the morning broke again. St Clear informed him that the object of his trials had been achieved and his reward at hand. Two of his lads were now old enough to go into the City, and it was therefore necessary to be within easier distance. He could return to Dulwich and accept such paying cases as would comfortably provide for his family.

This communication was made by St Clear in person, and after a lapse of ten years, crowded by vicissitudes and trials, Elinor was again permitted an interview with him who had become even more mysteriously wonderful by what she had learned of him in the interval.

It was not an argumentative meeting, but the two listened with bowed heads while St Clear sympathetically recalled the way by which they had travelled - the trials they had encountered, leaving ineffaceable scars and seams; the sacrifices - many of them forgotten except to the speaker - that had so willingly been made for his beloved and exalted Master; the hopes that, for the time, had been so frequently shattered; and the weight of the cross they had jointly borne. But it was over now - the morning had broken at last, and so far 'perfected through suffering' they might pass from the furnace into peace.

Chapter XXXV - Brixham Common Again

By this time Ernest Pawley had learned to be content in whatsoever estate he found himself. Even the modest pride of home and position of which he had once congratulated himself had been taken away and he had come to regard every condition of life as extremely tentative, and the whole world as a passing phase in the pilgrimage to an everlasting home. Whatever inconveniences, trials or disadvantages occurred by the way were ephemeral and not worthy of notice when compared with the glory that would shortly be revealed, and as the practice of watching for the end, and a readiness to hail it grew upon him, he found his mind diverted from the things of the moment until he was able to rejoice as having all things needful and abounding therein.

It was when this frame of mind, this habit of thought and the sense of the eternal had overpowered the temporal within him; when the things of earth had been shaken from the centre to their circumference, and he knew both from experience and demonstration that, at the best, time is rooted only in sand; when faith was well grounded in reason and he was not only able to say 'I believe, but I know in whom I have believed,' and was ready to give a reason rather than a hope for the faith that was in him; when the seeds of his consecration had struck, when the frosts of an early spring had hardened, and the fierce heat of summer had burned, and at length the autumn had gloried in the harvest which had ripened in spite of all and sundry - then it was that St Clear was commissioned to say 'It is enough,' and the trial of Pawley's patience and faith came to an end.

The circumstances were such as to require nothing but the simple permission he received to set him at liberty from all his troubles; and in this condition lay the indisputable assurance of his fidelity. For more than two years past, while he had frequently allowed himself and family to sit to meals of the meanest fare, he could have loaded his table with delicacies by accepting the payment that was eagerly pressed upon him. Was it right of him to do this? He certainly was at liberty to do as he chose himself, but was he justified in so acting when it entailed such privations upon his wife and family? The answer to such an inquiry demands a wider consideration than may at first be anticipated, since we shall entirely lose the Christian appreciation of the difficulty unless we proceed to solve it by the divinely-enforced canon - 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' This at once reaches beyond responsibility to the family in its restricted sense, and applies to the uttermost horizon of humanity. This love to our neighbour as ourselves necessitates an equal acquaintance with his position and circumstances, which can only be secured by following Christ - emptying ourselves and becoming sympathetic with them. 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' It will thus appear that the whole question of Christianity is raised in the inquiry. Apply it in all its breadth and scope, and the answer must be an unqualified approval of Pawley's action, because it would bring about a universal peace and usher in the long-expected millennium.

'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' Pawley had waited long and with some degree of patience. Now, with the breaking of the morning, the pillar of fire became the pillar of cloud, and at once moved forward. Let us follow it.

St Clear had given no hint as to what amount of remuneration he considered sufficient for Pawley to take for his labours. The numerous applications he was constantly receiving, and the generous offers which had been made to him for his services, placed a large income at once at his disposal in changing his rule. By discarding the class who had neither silver nor gold to give, and devoting the next

few years to those with whom money was a minor consideration, he had a splendid opportunity of making a comfortable provision for his family. He was well aware of it, and equally conscious that St Clear had left him perfectly free in his action; as usual he had simply indicated a course to be pursued, but the responsibility for methods and details had been left entirely with the individual. The burden had been in great measure lifted from the shoulders, but the feet were not yet guaranteed against slipping; the privation was past, but in the rebound would the liberated captive rush into the embraces of excess. There are trials of faith in the fierce sunlight of prosperity of which the soul never dreams in the night of adversity. The poverty-pinched hand naturally and greedily grips at unexpected treasure, and it requires as much grace of God to withstand the temptations of riches as to endure the pangs of hunger honestly in the face of opportunity.

Pawley realised this, and when the doors of his captivity were thrown open he still asked to be led and guided, laying even his newly-given opportunity before his Lord in a renewed consecration.

Both Elinor and himself interpreted St Clear's permission to indicate a restoration to the condition from which Foxleigh and Harleston had displaced them, and in conformity with this Ernest carefully made plans so that his energies could be equally divided between those able and willing to pay and those who had not the means, always leaving a certain margin for a plan he had long cherished - to add to his treatments in certain cases some little assistance in securing really needed food.

A more generous, but rigorously plain table, also produced very marked results in the increase of his own powers, and by the time he was ready to return to Dulwich he was in the full swing of a most successful career.

Ten years in a busy metropolitan suburb works very considerable changes in these days of expansion and development, and Ernest found that Brixham was no exception to the general rule. The widening of the streets, disappearance of buildings that were well-known landmarks, the erection of new and extensive business houses, improvement and enlargement of others out of all recognition, and above all the absence of well-known faces, and the presence of strangers, converted the old locality into an almost strange land, so that as he passed between his home and the railway station he found himself wishing to come across a face he could recognise, from whom he could hear some news of what had transpired in his absence.

One well-known place had not quite so changed itself beyond recognition; it was the shop of Albert Gerhard. It had swallowed up the tobacconist's next door, but apart from this was still the same, even to the name above the window. Was his old friend still living? The name was no guarantee of it, and day by day he watched the door if perchance he should discover the well-remembered face. At length he was rewarded. Gerhard still lived, and Brixham seemed more like itself ever after.

Of course they had a long talk before they parted. Pawley had much to say and

perhaps more to hear. Pinchbeck was dead years ago. Foxleigh had completed his sentence and paid a quiet visit to Brixham in order to gather up what fragments remained of his ruined business, after which he left for America. Blake, Harleston and Clamb had died in prison, and nothing further had been heard of Lucas.

‘And now about yourself, how have you been getting on? I have often wondered what had become of you. You’re like me, showing signs of wear, but have you been more fortunate than when you were here?’

‘Thank you. I have nothing in any way to complain of. Things have gone with me just about as we might expect them.’

‘I suppose you have gone on with your preaching?’ he ventured, with a good-natured, cynical smile.

‘No! I have done very little in the public way since I left here. Acton does not offer the facilities of Brixham in that direction and I have grown positively rusty for want of work. I have occasionally done a little among the brickmakers for the church people, or gone down to the Salvation Army, and for the last two years have been helping in a mission among the laundry women.’

‘Oh! those are trifles no one would expect you to mention,’ he remarked sarcastically. I was referring to open-air work - but you have given that up.’

‘Well, no, I cannot say that altogether. I have occasionally been to Kensal Green or Battersea Park, and for two years I had a meeting regularly in Hyde Park, but I found it was too far from home and was compelled to give it up. After that the Vicar of Acton introduced me to the Church of England Temperance Society, and I have been doing some little erratic work for them.’

‘If that is all I can understand how rusty you are. Shall you try to rub any of it off on the Common now you are back, or has it eaten in too far?’

‘I am hoping to do so.’

‘I thought so, and I imagine if I were to try and advise you otherwise it would be all to no purpose; not even though I convinced you that all the trouble of your life has arisen from what you did ten years ago. If it had not been for those meetings you would not have quarrelled with Foxleigh, nor fallen into the hands of Blake. God only knows how much is needed to teach some men wisdom, and if anything wrong comes of your new folly, I, too, shall say you richly deserve it.’

‘You are still the same honest but mistaken friend as ever,’ answered Pawley, ‘and if I looked at life from your stand point I have no doubt I should share your opinions and consider my own comfort more than the welfare of the wayfarer.’

‘Oh, go along,’ he cried with good-natured impatience. ‘You are still as bad as ever, and would argue the legs off an iron pot rather than give in. But you will not find the Common quite the same as you left it, I can tell you. And though there are crowds of people ready and willing to hear everyone who has anything to say, there

is also a good sprinkling of riffraff waiting to take a part in any available horseplay. There are a few speakers to whom one may listen agreeably for half an hour, but not many who can come creditably out of the cross-fire of questions they have to stand afterwards.'

'And has this grown out of our meetings ten years ago?'

'It has. So you see you have something to answer for.'

'I have more to be thankful for than I imagined. And yet you would prevent me renewing the work.'

'Oh, it's not quite such an unmixed blessing as you seem to think; for every Solomon you will find on the Common there are a hundred fools grinding their own axes.'

'I don't mind that. When fools stand up to air their folly they come into the way of knowledge and improvement, and even the rowdy element you refer to has a tendency to make such men take caution as to the extent of their utterances, while wiser people have a chance to reply and so scatter the pearls of truth and reason.'

When Pawley, accompanied by his two eldest sons, walked on the Common on the following Sunday afternoon, he found a much more animated scene than he anticipated even after Gerhard's information. Every 'ism' and 'ology,' fad and fancy, social, political religious and irreligious appeared to be represented, either in defence or opposition, and fastidious indeed must be the mind of the man who could not find in one of the multitude of meetings something to interest, instruct or amuse him. Some of the groups were of considerable proportions, and selecting the larger as being the more attractive to begin with, Pawley directed his steps thitherwards.

After listening to a very commonplace and orthodox address for a few minutes, he turned his eyes over the crowd, wondering what power held so many together. 'Who is the speaker?' he asked of a young man standing beside him.

'His name is Charnel.'

'Is he a minister?'

'No. Lord, no! He's a counter-skipper, but he is speaking for the Y.M.C.A. now.'

'I thought from the size of the crowd as I came up I should find one of the popular preachers speaking.'

'Charnel's nobody,' replied the young man, contemptuously; the crowd won't stand him much longer. We are waiting for that clean-shaven fellow with the swarthy face to get on the platform.'

'Who is he?'

'Ugh! There is no need to ask if you are a stranger in Brixham if you don't know David Dance,' he explained, evidently glad to say something to pass away the time. He calls himself the champion Christian apologist, says he was educated for a priest

or something of the kind, but he's a low, mean bully, anxious to be recognised as a theologian. His great point is vulgar humour, and had he lived a century ago, he might have succeeded in making some questionable kind of mark. Still he does say a good thing or two occasionally, and you may always make sure of finding the people where he is.'

With this introduction Pawley turned his attention to the Samsonic, mulatto-looking man who stood nervously tapping the rail of the portable platform with his fingers. He was a printer's porter, and consequently considered himself to be an educated and intelligent man, claiming that by virtue of his name alone - David Dance - he was entitled to his D. D. without reference either to the favour or assistance of any college or university - institutions for which he now held the most profound contempt. He was a man at once prompt and energetic, holding as a favourite axiom that 'no man who knows his business will tinker about his work,' a truth he proceeded to put into practice with laconic force, and occasionally, it may be, with doubtful taste. In this he was ably seconded by the strength and quality of his voice, which was full, harsh, metallic, and possessing a volume very much akin to the reputed bulls of Bashan.

But the crowd is certainly growing restless, and at a fairly emphatic hint from Dance the speaker collapses suddenly without any attempt at peroration or application of his platitudes. There is a spontaneous movement towards the platform, and expectant eagerness displaces the weariness hitherto seen on every face. Charnel still maintains his position, waiting to be questioned according to custom.

'What does the speaker mean by the blood of Christ?' presently comes the inquiry.

That is enough - the one spark necessary to set the combustible Dance in a flame. The lecturer is unceremoniously swept from the platform, and the question being purposely a theological one, or so construed by the champion, he steps up, panting for the fray. His hat is lifted while he runs his fingers through his long hair, during which he leisurely casts his wicked eyes over the audience.

'I don't think I am mistaken in the sound of that voice.' he begins - but it is absolutely impossible to convey an idea of the malicious, sarcastic tone - 'I thought not. I can see you, you dirty rat! Why don't you go home and ask your mother to boil your monkey face and feed the chickens with the soup, rather than stop here to poison the air respectable people wish to breathe. Go home, I tell you, get rid of your traces of the missing link, then you can come back and I'll see if it's possible to knock any Christian truth into your thick head.'

'Good old Dance, let 'em have it!' yells a voice from the back of the crowd as soon as the laughter moderates.

'Oh, you never fear, I'll let 'em have it quite as hot and strong as they want it. I'm no St Francis preaching to birds. I can tell you; I'm more like Patrick with the pigs.'

‘Answer the gentleman’s question,’ demanded the young man at Pawley’s elbow, as the guffaw called forth by his attempt at vulgar wit subsided.

‘I’ll answer his question; but let me first find the aspiring student.’ As he spoke his eye wandered over that part of the crowd from which the voice proceeded, and probably guided by a look of pained interest or some other indication which he thought to warrant his selection, he finally pointed directly to Pawley. ‘Oh you are the bumpkin, are you? I thought it was some lout or other with turnip jaws.’

‘You you mean me?’ asked Ernest, indignantly.

‘Mean you!’ he sneered, ‘no, I meant your hat.’ And recognising a total stranger in his imagined interlocutor he proceeded with one of his customary figures of speech on such occasions. It’s always a mystery to me why London should rob the country of such splendid specimens of the turnip field, but they will come like moths to the lamp, and haven’t brains enough even to know they’ll be burnt presently. They don’t know their alphabet before they rush to question intelligence. Like lambs to the slaughter they come; but we like to be kind to them, don’t we? Poor little innocents, some body must educate them, and I like to set you a good example. Now, my little dear, if you will open the ventilator of your hat I’ll try and get something through to the top of your head - I don’t suppose it will go much further. What the kind gentleman meant when he spoke about blood was b-l-o-o-d! Did you think he meant Everton toffee or peppermint humbugs?’

Dance knew the nature of his audience to a nicety and framed every point to suit its disposition, waiting while the laughter he provoked subsided before venturing his next essay. A stranger was a delicate morsel for him and he never failed to take as great advantage as possible. From the crown of his head to the sole of his feet he was a notoriety hunter not distinguishing between that and popularity - and the vigorous lungs of the gallery sounded more sweetly in his ears than the intelligent applause of the stalls. He had his reward but how much of conviction or Christianity there was in his method and style we must leave others to judge.

So far as Pawley was concerned he writhed, not so much at the coarse gibes as at the travesty of everything that was sacred, and though he might have hesitated to cross swords voluntarily with such a man, he was not such a coward as to run away when once drawn innocently into the reach of that vulgar ridicule.

‘You made a mistake in thinking that it was I who spoke,’ said Pawley, as the other waited for him to reply, and thus afford a handle for another sally, ‘but since you have so far flattered me, I would like to ask you, if you can lay aside your jesting for a moment, to give us a clearer definition of the phrase of “the blood of Christ.”’

‘Isn’t it wonderful what pudden-heads get loose on this Common on Sunday afternoons? Why Barnum hasn’t got you among his freaks I can’t imagine. Would anybody believe that such a hat could be induced to stop on such an empty head? Gentlemen, I must really ask you to excuse me. I mistook it for a man at first, but

now I see it's only a perambulating tailor's dummy - and doesn't know what blood is. When I say blood, I mean blood gore; and not Canon Gore, nor Kensington Gore, but liquid gore. But you're out of your depth, my child. You get home as quick as you can and find the gore of your mother's dress; milk will suit you better than argument for the present.'

'I am certainly at a loss to understand your arguments, but -'

'No speeches, young man,' interrupted Dance, 'we only want questions.'

'And I only want truth.'

'Oh, that's what your mammy sent you for, is it? You're out on the wrong day, and come to the wrong place. You can get it from a newspaper shop, or Smith's bookstall, in the morning; it will cost you sixpence. Take it home and read all Labby has to say to your mother and all the other little pigs.'

'I think you are right at last - persons in search of truth need not come here. I will wait not till to-morrow only, but till next Sunday, and then I will raise one voice at least for truth; and I think I know enough of you by this time to say that among the men who will surround me, one pig will crawl that my mother would blush to own.'

By this time Dance had become so sure of his superior position that he made no attempt to interrupt the speaker, and Pawley so adroitly and emphatically turned the epithet as to raise a storm of applause against the champion, and before it was possible to reply he was gone.

Chapter XXXVI – A Man With A Mission

During his parley with Dance, Pawley had been approached by a man rather below the average height, thin and wiry of build, with lugubrious countenance: anxiously greedy eyes, unkempt beard and ragged hair of a dry, mouldy grey appearance, who made no attempt to intrude or take any part in the colloquy, but waited in nervous anticipation for its conclusion to give him an opportunity for a word with the stranger.

Daniel Aucott was essentially a man with a mission, and it sat with almost crushing weight upon his shoulders. He was a peacemaker - one of those mistaken individuals who set out with honest purpose to follow and cast in their lot with the Galilean Prophet, but the sweet music of His gospel so charms their weary souls, that before even beatitudes are finished they sit down over-powered, and fail to realise the fact that the Christ moves onward while He speaks, and has thus passed out of sight and hearing, leaving them not only alone but wanting.

How many Aucotts are to be found upon the outer edge of Christianity, with closed eyes and unctuously-folded hands admitting the 'beautiful truth' that in the natural world 'one swallow does not make a spring' nor a single bloom faithfully represent a garden of flowers; but in the spiritual world they hold the Divine truth of the delusion that in one beatitude lies the whole of necessary Christianity, and a single catch-phrase represents the full teaching of the Christ. They sit in wrapped contemplation of a solitary ray of truth shining through the prism-words of Jesus spreading like a miracle spectrum across the black walls of their dark understanding, and imagine that

'The opening heavens around them shine

With beams of sacred bliss,'

all unconscious of the fact that it is necessary to leave the prison-house of their dogmatic and ignorant bigotry before they can understand the glorious fulness of the gospel into which they are called. Their midget minds have picked up an opalescent pebble on the shore of the sea of truth and their little simple souls are satisfied. Stuffed into their dogmatic pockets with the cautious greed of a miser, they walk around confident that they carry with them the New Jerusalem, with its walls garnished with all manner of precious stones. They are the keepers of its pearly gates, through which all their friends may pass unquestioned - but none whom they deny.

Poor Aucott had caught the thistle-down fibre of 'blessed are the peacemakers' carried by the wind of doctrine from the flower of the seventh beatitude, and at whatever sacrifice to truth, to humanity, or to God, peace had to be secured, and that according to his gospel; and if a second Isaiah came across his path with the message - 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their

transgressions,' the 'man with a mission' would, without thought or compunction, denounce the disturber of Israel as an enemy and a heretic.

Such was the man who turned to speak with Pawley as he left the hard-mouthed Dance.

'Will you pardon the liberty I take,' inquired the missionary, nervously, as he placed himself beside our friend, 'but with a deep concern for your spiritual welfare I should like to know whether you asked your question just now from a motive of curiosity or genuine interest?'

Ernest looked at the inquirer, whose earnestness was not to be questioned for a moment, and then replied, 'I imagine my action was prompted by a deeper reverence than the answer it met with.'

'I am much relieved to hear that. Are you a stranger here?'

'I can neither say yes nor no to that. I did live in the neighbourhood some ten years ago for a few months, and commenced what I believe were the first meetings on the Common in connection with Mount Pisgah Church. Since that time I have been living out west until the last few days.'

'Then you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ?'

'I trust I am.'

'And have been baptised?'

'I hope so.'

'But you know whether you are or not.'

'A man may easily say whether he has been baptised with water, which is the baptism of John, but the baptism of Christ is by the Holy Ghost, of which confession is better made by the life than the lip.'

'But every lip must confess that Jesus is the Lord, and if you are not in a position to make such confession you are not safe, my friend, and I pray you to be reconciled to God that you may be beyond all doubt.'

'I have neither affirmed nor denied anything, but I have expressed a hope that those who know me may find I have been baptised with a better baptism than water. Would you have me say more, imitate those against whom Christ warned us - who blew a trumpet when about to confess their holiness? Is such a confession honouring to God? I think not!'

'My dear friend, I am sadly afraid that you are like the rich young ruler - very near to the kingdom but lacking in some one thing.'

'Don't be afraid my good fellow. I may only be able to say "Sibboleth" where you say "Sibboleth," but I am an Israelite of the greater empire after all.'

'Ah! you must not be too sure of that, "for whoever shall keep the whole law and

yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” ’

‘I am afraid if you are going to insist on such punctiliousness in the letter, neither you nor I will be able to stand there - and what the examination of our conformity to the spirit will reveal I fear to think.’

‘Ah! now I begin to see your danger. You are leaning too much to your own understanding. Don’t do it, I pray you; it is a fallacy of hell and will bring you down to destruction. But why do you smile at me? Surely this is a matter too serious for levity.’

‘There is but little levity about me in the discussion of this subject, I can assure you, but I cannot refrain from smiling at the difficulty you give me in finding what position you hold in the proclamation of truth. I tried to imagine that you might be a prophet until you insisted on the observance of the jot and tittle of the law, but since all the true prophets repudiated the sacrifices as never commanded nor sanctioned by God, you cannot belong to them; and your last remark provoked my smile because it makes it equally certain you can neither belong to the disciples nor apostles.’

‘I hope - yea, I know I do.’

‘Then why do you ask me to renounce my own understanding as a fallacy of hell, while you have to lean upon your own before you can know that you are safe?’

‘Ah, well, my brother, I see just where you are, and of course you are not able to discern the deep things of God, but I will pray for you that your eyes may be opened, and that the Holy Spirit will lead you into these mysteries after which you are no doubt feeling if haply you may find them. In the meantime - but really I should have said that my name is Daniel Aucott - pardon me, I have no card with me - and your name is - ’

‘Ernest Pawley’ - handing his card.

‘Ah, yes, to be sure. Now let me ask if you intend to carry out your promise to speak on the Common next Sunday?’

‘Yes, certainly I shall.’

‘Won’t you allow me to dissuade you?’

‘Why do you wish to do so?’

‘Because I am convinced you do not hold the truth in its simplicity, and I wish in all faithfulness to prevent the spread of error.’

Pawley smiled again with good-natured forbearance upon his judge, but seeing the pain it occasioned he instantly cut it short.

‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he replied reassuringly. ‘If it has been given to you to look after the strawberry roots in the Master’s garden, don’t forget that there are vines, and peaches, and roses also to be attended to. Your dressing and method of

cultivation will not suit the fruit I have to look after, and I perceive that mine will not do for yours; but go on with your work, and may the Lord of the harvest bless you with an abundant increase.'

'He will do so; He has promised to do it already. But I am anxious for yourself - '

I know it, my friend; but you look after your strawberries, I will be careful for the peaches.'

'But I want to give you one word of advice if you will hear it.'

'With pleasure - what is it?'

'Don't be influenced too much by Dance. He won't do you any good.'

'You need not fear for that. He will have to change considerably before he and I will be able to work side by side in the same vineyard.'

'Not that I would have you think for one moment that I doubt his soundness in the faith - that is established far beyond all dispute; but he has such an unfortunate relish for vulgar jokes as you heard just now. He is carried away by it, and it makes him very objectionable occasionally.'

'Any man who can stoop to make a jest of the crucifixion,' Pawley replied sternly, is not only void of Christian faith, but also the rudiments of common decency. No, sir; Dance and I will have but little in common, I can promise you.'

'Still you must not forget that he is one of the brethren, and a splendid authority on Christian evidences when he is serious. But you are never sure but that some coarseness will come out and spoil everything.'

'But why do you allow such a man to occupy that position?'

'You are not the first who has asked that same question; I will give you our reason for it in order that you may understand the man, and also have an idea how to deal with him. He is exceedingly hard to manage, but very valuable in his ability to draw a crowd. Hundreds of men stand to hear him who would never come on the Common if he was not there, and we hope by some means to drop the good seed into their hearts.'

'And you are under the impression that his methods assist you?'

'Who shall limit the power of God?' he asked.

'Do you imagine God will associate Himself with such vulgarities - that He is so far overpowered to lend countenance to dishonouring travesties in order to extend His kingdom?'

'We don't know. "His thoughts are higher than our thoughts," and Dance can do good work when he keeps himself in hand; but he's a man with an iron will, and refuses to take any advice. More than once, when spoken to for his own good and the welfare of the cause, he has threatened to leave us and join the Socialists or

Secularists, and what should we do if he was to throw in his lot with our enemies?’

‘What would you do?’ asked Pawley, feeling no little contempt for those who were ready and willing to sacrifice Christ and truth rather than encounter the ridicule and opposition of a vulgar despot. I’ll tell you what you would do - get back to Christ for the necessary power to destroy such a blatant prophet, and cleanse Christianity of at least one hindrance to progress.’

‘But see the responsibility we should incur in cutting such a one adrift. The man is sound in his belief, and in that is the evidence that God has begun His good work in him; where may such a man be sheltered and protected, until God shall perfect his salvation, if not in the Church?’

‘Then make him keep quiet until such time as he can speak with reverence.’

‘Ay, my friend, when you know the man you will know how impossible it is to make him do anything. It is one of his frequent boasts that he would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven, and I honestly believe he would, therefore we have to be careful how we deal with him.’

‘And you mean to tell me that, knowing all this about the man, you consent to him representing Christianity to those for whose salvation you are honestly working? Would Christ allow him to do so when He insists that among the disciples he that would be greatest shall be the servant of all? Is not the mind of Dance in this respect the very sin you impute to the devil, and the boast he makes was that of Lucifer.’

‘Now you see our difficulty in dealing with him; still, no one can deny but that he is a true believer.’

‘So are the devils, and appear to possess a virtue in excess of Dance - they believe and tremble, but they are not disciples.’

‘Let me most earnestly warn you not to judge, remembering the Saviour’s words that “with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged again.”’

‘And I am willing to be so judged,’ replied Pawley, boldly, ‘and would much prefer to be condemned for an excess of zeal in defending the kingdom than for an unfaithful acquiescence in keeping a wolf among the sheep. Every true disciple of Christ is either a watchman upon the walls or a shepherd guarding the fold; we are responsible for the approach of enemies and the protection of the sheep. We have been cautioned of the tactics of the enemy - that he will even “transform himself into an angel of light” in the furtherance of his purpose to enter the kingdom and destroy the flock. But we have an infallible test by which we can tear off every mask and defy every assault and stratagem - “By their fruits ye shall know them.” “If a man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.” Was Christ coarse and vulgar in His conversations? In listening to His discourses are you kept in doubt as to whether His next sentence will call a blush to your cheek? And can you call yourselves loyal to the charge He has given to you, faithful to God, to Christ and the flock over which you

are supposed to watch, true to the lost and wayward you are commissioned to bring in, when you allow this man to turn even the crucifixion to ridicule in order to gain a laugh from those who have no interest in your labours, even though they are not actively leagued against you?’

‘But may we not have a beam in our own eye that we should attend to before we turn to the mote our brother is suffering from?’

‘Yes, my brother, if you are conscious of such an impediment or affection, get to the Oculist at once and have it removed; perhaps it is such an affliction which prevents you discerning the difference between a wolf and a sheep; neither do you seem able to understand the havoc a man like Dance is making among the flock.’

‘But you forget that we have the merciful provision of prayer, which God has graciously promised to hear and answer. We may not be able to discover of ourselves, but if we ask of God who giveth liberally and unbraideth not, we shall receive all things and be guided according to His glorious will and purpose.’

‘That is a very pretty sophistry, just such a one as the foolish virgins might have gone to sleep under - a kind of unlawful back door to the faith through which individual responsibility is rolled, under the impression that it falls on to the shoulders of God; but the imagination is as far from the truth as hell is from heaven. Prayer is a function given to man as a resort and refuge when he has done all he can and exhausted all the powers and energies, all the means and capabilities with which God has endowed him. It is not an excuse for laziness, or a shelter from responsibility. We are to work in the vineyard, and our toil becomes a prayer eloquent with faith in the harvest which must be given by God. Without the ploughing how can we look to the reaping; without the sowing shall we ever see the golden grain? Just so in the world of souls - whatsoever we sow that shall we also reap; but if we pray instead of sowing, if we cry unto God instead of watching, if we say “Lord, Lord” in place of restoring the fences, sad will it be for us when the Master returns to demand an account of our stewardship. It needs no answer to prayer to tell you what this man is doing. Lift up your eyes and see, and, to quote one of your own arguments as used by Christ, let me say - “He that is faithless in that which is least will also be faithless in that which is much.”’

‘Now you are getting on to dangerous and treacherous ground when you wish to take the power and guidance from the hands of God into your own. Ah, my friend, purge your mind from any idea that you can obtain justification by works, “for by the works of the law shall no man living be justified”; but blessed be God, Jesus has done it all. There is our only hope.’

‘How proud He must feel,’ replied Pawley, with a touch of irony in his voice, ‘when He reviews His soldiers of the cross - men who wear His livery, bear His arms, feed upon His bounty, revel in His mercies, but who refuse to draw a sword or encounter an enemy in His cause, excusing themselves by saying “We are very weak

- the captain does all the fighting!" Aucott, if you are right I am wrong; and if so I will promise you I will laugh one day at the sarcasm of Jesus when, pointing to you and your friends, He shall say to the world of unbelievers - "These are they who came out of great tribulation." Good day, for I imagine it will be as impossible to agree with you as with Dance.'

It is an unwritten rule on Brixham Common that persons engaged in private conversation shall not stand. When therefore Aucott and Pawley entered into their argument, not a few who had followed the stranger with their eyes gathered round, anxious to measure his calibre and form an idea of the prospects for his attack on Dance on the next Sunday. Aucott was well known and the argument was left strictly to the two, but as Pawley withdrew from the 'man with a mission' he heard someone remark,-

'He put Aucott in a tight corner once or twice, and Dance won't have it all his own way.'

CHAPER XXXVII

THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

The prospect of a debate on Brixham Common was always sure to draw a crowd; but when a stranger came forward with a determination to lower the colours of the invincible Dance, and a week had been allowed for preparation and advertisement, it is not surprising that a most unusual assembly waited impatiently for the opening of the argumentative combat.

Dance, who would be called upon to defend himself on this occasion, was well known, and a casual acquaintance with his vigorous style and methods was, as a rule, sufficient to advise most would-be debaters to leave his tenure of the post of champion unchallenged. But the exception had at length arisen; a man had thrown down the gauntlet respecting whose capacity for the encounter opinion was somewhat divided. Those who had heard him deal with Aucott on the previous Sunday were convinced he would make a fair fight, but Aucott had not the power of ridicule and satire upon which Dance replied to defend himself when argument failed; and the question in dispute was whether the new man possessed any equivalent to this harbour of refuge into which the theologian so frequently retreated. Among the frequenters of the Common there were not a few who would rejoice to see Dance go under, but they doubted whether the stranger was able to carry off the laurel the D.D. had so long and loudly prided himself on wearing. But the champion was void of doubt. In confidence lay his strength. The fight was upon his own ground, which gave him a great advantage. His opponent was unknown, practically friendless, and not acquainted with the peculiarities of the place and people - all of which were trifles, but important trifles which could be turned to account by Dance to discount any weight of argument or 'unexpected tricks the new man might have up his sleeve'; and at the thought of these the stentorian orator kept

his dark face comparatively bright with cunning smiles weighted with unspoken purposes and determination.

He had taken a prominent stand in front of the chair Pawley's sons had already placed in a favourable position, and around him stood a few doubtful friends, prepared to encourage his banter if the new man was overmatched, or equally ready to laugh and ridicule should Goliath go down before the sling of David. Charnel, evidently nervous as to the issue, occupied the busy centre of a group, but the office of commander-in-chief of the defenders of the faith had been deputed to a mercurial man named Blewitt, an agent of the Evangelisation Mission who had a very disagreeable habit of foaming at the mouth when in the least excited, which tended to make speech with him anything but pleasant. Like a knowing general he broke his forces up into small parties and stationed them in such scattered positions as to make their lungs available when called into service; for it was a foregone conclusion that the man who differed from Dance was an enemy to the truth.

Blissfully unconscious of the commotion he had so innocently occasioned, as the hour of three approached, Pawley leisurely walked across the Common with Elinor upon his arm, contrasting the scene with their experience of former times and speculating as to the outcome of this new departure. As they neared the great crowd he made as if to turn aside, and looked around to ascertain where his sons had found a place for his domestic platform.

"Ere y'ar, mister; Dance is a-waitin' for yer," cried a youth, and Ernest for the first time realised that he was the one expectation of the concourse, at the size of which he had already wondered.

The people quietly divided, looking curiously and critically at him as he passed through then closed their ranks and drew together in their desire to hear what he had to say, and how he was able to say it.

At once he removed his hat and stepped upon the chair, from the vantage ground of which he was able to form a better opinion of the size of his meeting. His cheek blanched perceptibly, an incident Dance noticed, and smiled to think that his opponent already repented the step he had taken. But

"Tis better far that confidence should wait
Than raise its home upon some unknown land,
Or it may prove that where we hoped for rock
We only built upon a bed of sand.'

It was not a sense of nervousness but responsibility, not repentance but joy, not pride but gratitude, that thrilled him and occasioned the passing pallor, and Dance had scarcely time to congratulate himself before he was disillusioned by the smile which passed over Pawley's face; and almost already transformed under the

influence of an inspiration which came from the internally-whispered assurance, 'Fear not, for I am with thee,' he quietly opened his shoulders and prepared to speak.

'Gentlemen, perhaps one word of personal explanation may not be out of place before proceeding to the question I have promised to discuss this afternoon. To most - to nearly all of you I am a perfect stranger; but it is due to myself to say that I am not altogether so to the Common on which we meet. Some ten years ago it was my privilege, under the auspices of Mount Pisgah Church, to hold the first meetings of a consecutive Christian character very near to the spot on which we now stand, which meetings actually proved to be the seed from which all this activity has arisen. To say that after so long an absence I am glad to find such a result on my return, is but feebly to express my feelings, because even the utterance of the folly of fools provokes wise men to answer with words of wisdom that truth may be preserved. And though, with the freedom and facilities to be found here, one cannot expect to find a Solomon in every would be orator, it cannot be otherwise than some amount of good should result from all the discussions to which you listen from time to time. Speculative ideas are examined from every side, theories propounded and inquired into, propositions analysed, reforms suggested, truth made more clear and established. All this not only tends to pass away a pleasant hour, but leaps to the development of our minds and assists in the betterment of humanity.

There was a time - fortunately it now lies far behind us - when such a sight as that which lies before my eyes was an impossibility, when a creed-bound and tyrannical church kept its iron grip upon the liberty of thought, and freedom of speech was an offence to be answered by the argument of the faggot and the rack. Thank God those days are gone for ever so far as England is concerned! And yet I cannot forget that such days might have been our heritage but for the courageous efforts and self-sacrificing energies of our forefathers, who have handed down to us the torch of truth for us to carry forward into the yet fuller liberty wherewith it is destined to make all nations free.

“Great names had they, but greater souls -

True heroes of their age -

That like a rock in stormy seas

Defied th' opposing rage.”

'When we recall the almost superhuman task they accomplished, when we think of the changes they wrought, when we regard the results already attained, and the superior position in which we stand as the reward of their indomitable heroism, can we be false to the ideals which they conceived, to the hopes which thrilled their bosoms, and the truths for which they so nobly laid down their lives?

'You, like myself, gentlemen, have enough of the old time British blood coursing in your veins to answer "No." Your presence on this Common, Sunday after Sunday,

is an eloquent affirmation of the fact.

‘One of the principal contributing causes to the liberty and advancement of our days has been the breaking of the temporal despotism of the Church, giving education over to a secular stewardship. With this the doors of opportunity have been thrown widely open and civilisation crowned with intelligence is marching forward towards the consummation of truth and righteousness. The Church is no longer the monopolist, or even the arbiter of learning; the Press has usurped the educational function of the pulpit, and even in sacred matters the clerics are often found to be inferior in logic and wisdom to many a secular professor.

But the ghost of old theological infallibility refuses to be laid. It haunts the houses of convocation and nonconformist councils equally with the Vatican. Bunyan’s toothless, gibbering, impotent pope still mutters its angry threats as the pilgrims march by; and though in the enjoyment of your freedom, and in the exercise of your intelligence, you have refused to assemble where harmless and superstitious anathemas may be hurled at your heads, preferring rather to look upon the works and wonders of God as recorded in the book of nature, or to listen to the logic that boasts no other inspiration than that of common sense, it follows you even here in the fantastic masquerade of servile dupes who delight to expose their slavish ignorance.

So much I discovered last Sunday when I renewed my acquaintance with Brixham Common - ’

‘And you got more than you wanted. Ignorant fools as we are you met *your* match,’ cried Dance, who had been impatiently waiting for a fitting opportunity to break in upon the discourse which was attracting an attention he was only too anxious to disturb.

Pawley paused at the instant he heard the voice, and listened patiently - pleasantly - to what his opponent had to advance, and when it was perfectly clear that the interjection was finished, he resumed with the same calm and easy style he had hitherto maintained.

‘If it suits your humour better, gentlemen, I am willing to admit that I did meet my match and struck it.’ This quiet thrust - perhaps all the more potent because so quietly delivered - brought out a ringing cheer, which the speaker only appeared to notice as an opportunity to wipe the perspiration from his face before resuming. But the effect it produced upon the meeting was magical, and if Dance had not caught its significance, there were few others who were not convinced that the match would not prove to be very unequal so far as the new man was concerned.

‘The little spark it produced - Only flickering for a moment - was enough to set my soul on fire, and under the warmth of its glow I am with you to-day to speak of a truth far in excess of the ability of any editorial pen to do justice to - and I am equally certain it is beyond the power of certain humorous, barnyard, wallowing,

grunting animals to appreciate; and their attempt to discourse upon such subjects is only an insult to intelligence and a caricature of reason.'

It was a merciless castigation, delivered with coolest deliberation, rousing the audience to a perfect fury of delight, as stroke after stroke from that whip of small cords fell upon the shoulders of the great D.D. And here let it be said that though Pawley never resented but rather encouraged honest and honourable inquiries during his discourses, even though the thread of his argument was interrupted thereby for the moment, he would never tolerate such tactics as Dance was intending to adopt. Such interruptions had to be cut short, and the one attempt convinced the champion that discretion was the better part of valour, who much to the chagrin of his satellites determined to allow Pawley to go on.

The speaker, feeling assured that he might now proceed without further danger of interruption - an immunity he was anxious to secure for the sake of his argument - at once set himself to deal with his subject.

'Some of you will remember that at the close of an address last Sunday a question was asked, "What does the speaker mean by the blood of Christ?" It may have been asked in a captious spirit, with a view of calling forth such a scene as the one we witnessed; or it may have been asked with an honest desire to hear some explanation of a difficulty which has been present to the minds of every honest inquirer from the early days of the Church until now, but has not yet received a satisfactory answer. Whatever the motive of the questioner might be I will not attempt to say; but the question itself is one in which every intelligent man has an interest, and one upon which the widest expression of reverent opinion may be advantageously courted. It lies at the very foundation of all doctrinal disagreements; it marks the divisions of our churches, is the fundamental cause of sectarian struggles; the unreasonable, illogical and superstitious ignorance which has been, and is still, claimed for the orthodox contention on this point, is driving intelligent people from the Church, and, instead of extending the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, is sowing the tares of Agnosticism broadcast and fostering in the minds of the people a healthy contempt for all ideas of religion.

'I want you to understand me very clearly when I say that I have not come among you in any way as an infallible dogmatist. I make no claim to being wiser than others, nor any pretension to being the equal of those men who have established a claim of intellect among the leaders of thought. I simply ask for a reverent and free discussion of these matters which present difficulties to our minds, and having thought and studied this question in my own way, I have aspired to open a discussion in which I hope it will be found possible for us to mutually assist each other; and in doing so I am encouraged by the recollection that it is occasionally the purpose of God to use the foolish things of this world to confound the mighty, and the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are.

'Before we can hope to receive any satisfactory answer to our inquiry it is

absolutely necessary that we obtain some idea as to the origin and practices of the Hebrews in which the blood had any part, because the root of our inquiry lies there, and our decision must be arrived at in consonance with what we find in Jewish law, which Christ declared He came to fulfil and not to destroy. The slightest acquaintance with Hebrew history makes us conscious of the very sacred reverence with which the blood was regarded as the seat of life "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." For this reason it was prohibited under the severest penalty as an article of food in any form, the law prescribing - "Moreover, ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it shall be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people."

I am not anxious to draw inferences prematurely, but while this law and estimate is fresh in our memories we may ask ourselves the question whether Christ in His fulfilment of this law would be likely to give to the cup of the Last Supper the physical interpretation we heard on this Common last Sunday? I mention the point merely in order that it may not be lost, but at present have no wish to draw any conclusion therefrom.

Now, having established the sanctity with which the blood was regarded, we may pass on to notice the double use to which it was put in the Levitical economy. This distinction is as new to our western thought, so far as I am aware, as it is important, and in the appreciation of the difference lies the key to understanding the true attitude of the Christ to the world. Let me therefore ask you to follow me carefully. There are six different offerings for which animal sacrifices were, by some authority, ordained and made; these are to be divided into two classes, in the first of which are five and in the second one. The five are the Sin-Offering, Trespass-Offering, Burnt-Offering, Peace-Offering and the Atonement. In each of these cases, with a minor reservation in the case of the Peace-Offering, the blood of the animal slain was thrown upon or at the foot of the altar. But the important point for you and I to notice to-day is this, that the whole of this class of sacrifices is repudiated again and again by both psalmists and prophets as never being ordained or sanctioned by God. The voice of the Bible is more authoritative than mine, and I ask your careful attention to what it says. There are few of you to whom these words of Isaiah will be unfamiliar: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord; I am full of burnt offerings or rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hands to tread My courts?" Jeremiah makes the same repudiation: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people." It were easy for me to go on and repeat the confirmations of Samuel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others to these declarations, but in the mouths of two witnesses let this be established on behalf of

the prophets. From the Psalmist I also cull a double testimony to the same effect: "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hath Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required." "For Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Shall I add to these the twice-uttered declaration of the Christ, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." And finally the apostolic affirmation that "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

'All these passages are not read from a Bible I have forged for the purposes of my argument; they are from the old book which you and I have loved from infancy, they are the consistent and unbroken testimony of inspired and authorised messengers of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, bearing witness to the fact that the doctrine of a vicarious atonement for sin is a fable of man's invention, and affirming the everlasting truth which is founded in righteousness that "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

'But there is yet a way of escape for the sinner. There is another use to which blood was put among the Hebrews, a recognised ordinance - not a sacrifice - "steadfast and sure," and this we have yet to consider. We to a large extent have learned to forget one of the aspects in which the Old Testament speaks of God in some three hundred instances. Shall I say it is the most important aspect in which we can regard Him? If I did I should be able to find good warranty for so doing in the fact that it has been chosen as the most adequate and suitable designation to give to the two parts of Holy Scripture, as the Old and New Testament: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations."

'It is the use of blood in its covenant aspect we have now to consider.

'What is a covenant? It is a contract entered into between two parties, whereby each is bound to perform and observe a certain agreement under stipulated conditions, which compact is ratified by a seal or oath.'

'When God brought Abram out from his father's house he entered into a covenant with the patriarch to give him the land of Canaan and make of him a great nation, as the stars of Heaven for multitude. If we turn to the record we shall learn something of the process by which these covenants were made. God said unto him: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said: Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him: Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece, one against (opposite

to) the other . . . and it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.” This burning torch passing between the divided pieces was the symbol of God confirming the covenant, a custom observed on all occasions, and during the passage the contracting parties took solemn oath that they might be so divided if they broke their pledge. This solemn covenant observance is referred to by Jeremiah where speaking for the Lord he says, “And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof . . . I will even give them into the hands of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life.”

‘When the covenant was a verbal one, usually a pillar of witnesses was set up, but in this instance the sign was to be the birth of an heir out of due time; if the covenant was inscribed the document and contracting parties were all sprinkled with the blood of the divided victim, the flesh of which was prepared for the covenant feast, of which both parties ate, and thus were mystically bound together eating of the one flesh and being sprinkled by the one blood.

When Israel became a nation, and God had so far fulfilled His covenant made to Abram, which included their redemption from Egypt, all the promises made to the patriarchs individually were brought together and a more explicit form of covenant was entered into between God and the people of Sinai. Moses and all the elders of the people went into the mount, where the words of the covenant and the judgments were written down, and they “builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.” I am particularly anxious just here that you should observe that no special sacrifice is offered in connection with this covenant, but the blood of sacrifices offered before the law is made known is used for the purpose; Moses sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord (two of the repudiated sacrifices which had long been offered), and Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar (the symbol of God). And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning these words.”

‘I have been thus careful to lay before you these two uses of the blood among the Hebrews in the very words of Scripture, because it is necessary we understand these before we can intelligently grasp the position and meaning of Christ and be able to comprehend the fulness of His words when He said, at the institution of the last supper - “This is My blood of the New Testament.” The very words “new covenant” silence all doubt at once and for ever; it is used in a covenantal and not a sacrificial sense.

‘But we must not miss the relationship which Christ held to the old covenant, nor fail to observe in what way it was essentially destroyed and necessitated a new one. “In Me shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” was the deeply-veiled promise of God to Abraham. Was not Christ the fulfilment thereof? In Him the covenant of God with David is kept, and through Him might not the glory of Jerusalem have been restored and perpetuated. God was true though Israel had been faithless. “He came unto His own but they received him not,” and when the Jewish nation confirmed the choice of their leaders by the acceptance of Barrabbas in lieu of the Christ whom they would not have to reign over them, the old covenant was destroyed, not by God, but by the Jews. Christ fore-knew this at the Paschal supper and entered into a new covenant sealed in His own blood - the blood of the living vine to which both Matthew and John refer, and this is “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

‘It is a new covenant, not a sacrifice in the Jewish sense, which the Christ made, and the whole gospel is so declared in a testamentary form, hedged around by the covenanted conditions that it is almost incredible how we can escape them. Notice the two parts. Take the beatitudes - the poor in spirit receive the kingdom of heaven, they that hunger after righteousness shall be filled, the pure in heart shall see God. Later on we hear Christ declare “Come, and I will receive you;” “With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again”; “Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you”; “If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you”; “If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him.” From the commencement of His ministry to its close, and even afterwards in His messages to John in the revelation, the same covenanting relationship is maintained, and in neither parable, sermon nor prayer of the Master’s is there a single word that can honestly be interpreted in the light of substitution.

‘With this re-setting and restoration of the original truth of the gospel, as I believe it to be, appealing alike to heart and intellect, it only requires one more word from me to answer the question I have steadily kept in mind through the whole of my argument. What do I mean by the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin? We will be consistent, for it is not necessary that we should seek to destroy the law, therefore we may still read “for the blood is the life thereof,” and at once we have the very significant reply that the life of Jesus Christ emulated by you and I cleanseth from all sin. He was without sin, and as we become like Him who was our example we too shall be cleansed and sanctified, entering upon the heritage of the saints which is everlasting life, and death - the penalty of sin - shall not come nigh unto us. Such life which we are called to live is the light of Christ shining into the dark corners of the earth to lead the lost and erring home; it is the magnetic omnipotence of consecrated love realising in the disciple the promise of the Master - “And I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me.”

‘For such a living religion, transforming mankind into a host of ministering

spirits, breathing benedictions as the sun pours forth light and heat, the music of whose footsteps shall be symphonies of hope, whose touch shall be a balm to bind up the broken-hearted and break the gyves of the captive, the world is waiting wearily to-day. The system which now sits in the seat of Christ, using His name but possessing nought of His spirit, has already reigned too long. We want the old Christ from whose lips the old gospel fell, and the interest of the people will instantly revive. He would be as welcome among the common people of London to-day as among the crowds of Galilee twenty centuries gone by. It is the sycophantic nostrum blasphemously called a gospel from which you turn away in disgust and contempt; it is the old unchangeable, ever-loving prophet of Nazareth for whom all men are seeking still. Let His pure gospel sound forth from heart and life, in example and precept, in church and office, in chapel and Stock Exchange, in home and workshop, from pastor and people, from deacon and member, and at once tension, estrangement, suspicion and strife will cease between the classes; let it become the moving power of Parliament and every political difficulty will solve itself; let it become the standard of international diplomacy, and we shall touch the angelic ideal "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."'

He had finished, having spoken for a full hour with calm but fluent deliberation. There was no effort or attempt to secure any advantage by oratorical effect, but every word was weighted with the conviction of truth. He was well assured that his argument travelled over new and debatable ground to his hearers, though it could not be doubted that he himself had often traversed it before, and the familiarity with which he used his Bible at every step, disdaining anything in the shape of a note or memorandum, carried confidence towards conviction.

It was a wondrously strange and daring argument to put forward, with deliberate intent setting itself to the destruction of the whole theological edifice and demanding a reconstruction upon an entirely new basis. And yet, was it quite certain that it was a new basis, or only a rediscovery and resurrection of the old discarded foundations? There was a firmness and solidarity about the proposition, the intense fervour which only comes of truth in the way the argument was enforced, the strange confirmatory evidence of Bible utterance, combining to demand further thought and consideration before one would dare to reply. The new man had certainly come with a new argument, and with logical cogency he had expounded it, with a modesty which was not lost upon the thoughtful part of his audience, not a few of whom were impressed with the idea that his coming would mark an era in the discussion of religious opinions and teachings on Brixham Common.

As the speaker ceased, quietly handing his Bible to his son, but retaining his stand in anticipation of the criticisms he was prepared to receive, there was a general movement throughout the audience, such as one is accustomed to see when a lengthy spell is broken, and almost every man looked with silent significance at his neighbour, but said nothing. There was a marked absence of the usual clamour to

secure the first question.

‘Now, Dance,’ cried someone, presently, ‘hurry up and let him have it.’

But the great D.D. was still standing in the position he had maintained for the last half-hour, with his arms folded across his chest and his eyes intent upon the ground. He was thinking and the call to action was unheeded.

‘He’s sick, an’ wants to go home to his ma,’ cried someone from the opposite quarter.

This produced a guffaw at the expense of the champion, but he evidently did not hear it.

‘Suppose your new idea of religion could be accepted,’ asked a well-known agitator, ‘how would it bring about a settlement of the dispute between Capital and Labour?’

‘It would enforce a recognition of the golden rule “Whatsoever ye would that a man should do to you do ye even so to him.” A man who did not order his life in accordance with this would not be admissible to a Christian communion, and absence from it would entail a penalty of distinction few men would care to pay. Righteousness would thus become valuable for itself, and morality a habit rather than a profession.’

‘How would it affect the Land Question?’ asked a Socialist.

‘It would assert that the “earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.” It would establish a universal brotherhood in righteousness and justice, on a wider, broader and purer basis than that of the Social Democratic Federation, in which responsibilities and considerations would be regarded by the law of love rather than a rigid right.’

‘Will it secure an equal distribution of wealth?’ asked a very pronounced ne’er-do-well.

‘Most certainly not!’ This brought out a warm expression of approval from an audience who followed keenly to see the practical application of the Christianity he advocated. It would secure to every man, under any circumstances, all the necessities of life, and after that equality of opportunity for all. Signal labours and noteworthy services would secure commensurate acknowledgment, or there would be no incentive to progress and development. On the other hand, the drones in the human hive would be compelled to perform their portion of the aggregate duty.’

‘There are weightier matters than those of labour and politics involved in your blasphemous utterances of this afternoon,’ cried Charnel at this point. He had been waiting for Dance to lead the attack as arranged, but the champion had evidently met his match, or was not in a debating humour until he had digested the discourse, and Charnel could no longer restrain his impetuosity, but rushed towards the speaker, followed by a small band of adherents, who were thus unitedly able to force

their way through the crowd. 'We have committed to us a gospel in the full enjoyment of which our fathers have lived and died, and under the influence of which we have been brought from the powers of darkness into the marvellous light of God. That gospel I am now prepared to defend with my life if need be, and I challenge you to deny this declaration of Scripture, which I call upon every young man within sound of my voice to hear as the word of the living God: "Who in his own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed."'

There was a loud shout of partisan applause in encouragement of this opening attack upon the heretic, which Pawley made no attempt to suppress.

'There is no man upon this Common,' he began, perhaps with even more deliberation than he had yet used, or it might be that it only appealed to be so in contrast with the wild excitement of Charnel; 'there is no man upon this Common more conscious of the fact that we differ widely in our opinions than I am myself. Still, gentlemen, we each have a right to our own, and there is no need to grow excited in the discussion.' (There was a slight interruption, but he wisely ignored it.) 'I shall not think of accepting Mr. Charnel's challenge to deny the declaration he quotes - it is in the epistle of Peter and therefore undeniable. But though I do not deny the passage, I am at liberty to disagree with the interpretation he would put upon it. I ask you please, to hear me, and I will listen to you again in turn.

'Jesus *identified* Himself *with* us, but never *substituted* Himself *for* us, and in this sense He bore our sin (the penalties, grievances and the sufferings natural to the human body) in His own body, not that we might not suffer, because "if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him," but in order to be an example, and show to us that death itself has no power to hold a righteous man. The covenant condition is distinctly laid down in the passage - He dies "that we, having died to sin, might live again unto righteousness." Without our dying to sin and rising again to righteousness His death is of no avail. How then can we find a substitution here?'

'It is a lie of hell, and we will have no more of it!' shouted the enraged Charnel. Let all who are Christians help me to overthrow the infidel!'

With this he and his contingent rushed the platform.

In such a crowd there is always a number glad to indulge in a little horseplay, without a thought of anything beyond the amusement of the moment, and such, joining their efforts to the muscular Christianity, created a scene of riotous confusion and danger more exemplary of the spirit of hell than heaven. Decent people at once fled in all directions, and Pawley, thrown from his chair, which was broken to pieces to emphasise their arguments, was speedily reduced to a blood-bespattered and ragged condition, his wife and sons sharing his ill-treatment.

What the result would have been before the fanatical zealots had finished it is hard to conjecture, but some few of his audience, ashamed at such an outrage on

civilisation, gathered to the assistance of the two or three constables, and rescued him faint and bleeding from his perilous position, after which they saw him home, free from any other molestation than a yelling mob, in which Blewitt and Charnel were prominent figures.

Chapter XXXVIII – Orthodoxy

Towards the latter part of the week Aucott called to see Pawley, with the ostensible purpose of ascertaining if he had met with any serious mishap in the scuffle, and was honestly relieved to find that beyond a few bruises and a scratch on one cheek he had sustained no injury. Elinor had not seen their visitor before, and was not sure whether his apparent speciousness was natural or simply a religious accretion. She was not long, however, in assuring herself that the expressed purpose of the visit had an ulterior supplement and watched carefully to discover what it was.

After much nervous fidgeting it began to show itself presently.

‘I suppose the experience of last Sunday will prevent you going on the Common again.’

‘Why so?’ queried Ernest, lifting his brows in one of his mischievous smiles.

‘Because you see what a dangerous course it is to pursue.’

‘Oh! Yes! Perhaps it is,’ he answered with soft, sarcastic reflection. ‘I had not thought of that! I suppose it was such a discovery as that that led the disciples to leave Jesus and flee from Gethsemane. Let me see. I don’t think I bear the name of any one of the twelve. No! Then I don’t see why I need follow their example.’ Then with more pointed seriousness he resumed: ‘Some time since I joined a small brigade of the soldiers of the Cross, in whose instructions is found this order -

*“Where duty calls, or danger,
Be never wanting there.”*

‘In accordance with that, if you think there is danger on the Common I must be there. What comes of it is not my concern. I have to do my duty; results are in the hands of God.’

‘I am very sorry to hear you say that.’

‘Sorry to hear that a man can be faithful? Surely my ears have not heard aright.’

‘It is your fidelity to an erroneous cause I deplore, my dear friend.’

‘Is it the cause of Jesus Christ, or that of the world’s redemption which is wrong?’

‘My dear Mr. Pawley, let me assure you that I have the most affectionate interest in your welfare - ’

‘I believe you have.’

‘Then do allow me to persuade you. It is the cause of strife that is wrong - anything that promotes such disturbances as we saw last Sunday cannot be right, and I pray you, for the Master’s sake, not to endanger a repetition.’

Pawley smiled at the deluded sophist.

‘There will be no danger if they wait for me to commence the fight.’

‘But they won’t! Don’t you see that it is you that is in error?’

‘I believe you honestly think so,’ he replied, but unfortunately I am not able to agree with your conclusions. But even though I am in error, it is not wise for your party to fight. An intellectual position will never be established by physical arguments. Brutality is not the progenitor of wisdom. Surely you know enough of history to recall the fact that pitch, and fire, and lions, and racks, and fagots, and torture, have all most ignominiously failed in the past, and in spite of all the inventions and schemes of ignorance and superstition “the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of the church!”

‘That is just our argument - or rather I should say it is just their argument, for I want you to understand that outside my own family no one knows that I have called upon you; and no one will know it. Do you forget that the men who used all that violence used it against the Church, and that is why it failed. Don’t you see that you are doing the same thing, and must meet with the same result?’

‘I think I must have made a mistake somewhere,’ replied Pawley, sinking again into his reflective mood. I was thinking it was the Jewish Church that crucified Jesus Christ, and afterwards did its best to exterminate His teaching; and I was also running my head against the idea that it was the so-called Church of Christ that instituted the Inquisition, carried out the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and lighted the fires of Smithfield.’

‘But those were false churches opposing the new and true faith. You must not forget that.’

‘And how are we to know that such is not the case to-day?’

‘Because we know that we have the true faith recorded in the word of God.’

‘The Jewish and the Roman Churches were equally sure of the same thing, and were as honest in resisting the new teachings as you and your friends are to-day. Don’t you think it would be more creditable to common sense if you learned wisdom from the failures of the past and acknowledged the futility of brute force as an argument in this discussion? Even if you are not willing to take the advice of Christ, and let the wheat and tares grow together till the harvest, you might with advantage listen to the suggestion of Gamaliel to “refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”

‘You make me tremble at your ability to wrest the Scriptures, even though you are unwilling to take your own advice.’

‘How do you mean?’

‘If you see there are so many tares among the wheat, why don’t you let them alone until the harvest?’

‘I shall refrain from using any brute force in plucking them up, which was Christ’s objection to their removal; but if by turning the light of truth upon them I can cause them to wither, while the wheat is strengthened, I am doing a worthy work.’

‘So must we earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.’

‘We must all do that, my friend; but it is well to make sure that it is such faith we are contending for.’

‘But we do know we have this faith.’

‘So did the Jewish and the Roman Churches think they knew the same thing, but history has shown they were both in error in their opposition to a further revelation.’

‘But look at the bright examples of the men the Church has produced.’

‘God forbid that I should forget such lives. But was there not an Enoch and an Abel before any church existed; was there not a Simeon and an Anna in the Temple: a Thomas à Kempis and a Manning in the Church of Rome; cannot Hinduism boast a Gautama, and a pagan faith a Socrates? All these and thousands of others may be named in defence of the religions of their day equally with the saintly lives of to-day; but the question is, are these brilliant examples fair and average specimens of the product of the institutions to which they belonged, or did they rise to their eminence because they were superior to, and in spite of the defects in such communions?’

‘But you must not mention Socrates and Gautama in the same breath as Spurgeon or Moody.’

‘No! I might have to apologise to the ancients if I did so.’

‘But they are heathens.’

‘So were Abel and Enoch.’

‘Oh, my friend, I tremble for you - Enoch walked with God!’

‘So did Socrates and Gautama as closely as they were able in the light in which they lived.’

‘But they had not the faith.’

‘How do you know what was or was not the faith for them? If we apply the standard of Christ to their lives and judge of them by the fruits they have produced, both you and I may well envy them. In spite of the faith we profess and rejoice in, my friend, your name and mine will scarcely survive our decease as many days as theirs has stood centuries; and being saints of God, from their immortality they still speak to us.’

‘But you appear to forget that however charitably we may be disposed to look upon them as men, they are still in their carnal nature and the “carnal mind is at enmity with God.” As men they have been all that could be required, but without faith it is impossible to please God!’

‘Aucott, your religion is a strange compound made up of pinches of truth ever varying and changing in order to preserve its imagined infallibility, like the wonderful concoctions with which children play at physics, in which both disease and remedy exist in the minds of the actors, and only serve to illustrate the scope of juvenile precocity. The faith and truth of Christ is wider than our comprehension can reach; the words He spoke in the days of His flesh were literally to the sheep of the Jewish fold, but the adaptation of their spirit may be applied to the other folds of which He spoke - I say the adaptation of their spirit, giving life and health and peace, but the binding cords of the letter, with punctilious respect to its jots and tittles, brings death alike to your religion and manliness. Try to get a wider outlook on God and you will be a happier and more useful man.’

As Pawley spoke, the face of his visitor brightened, and for once almost entirely lost its wonted drawn and haggard appearance. For the moment Pawley thought the sign was a hopeful one, but it proved to be a mirage.

‘I am so glad you have been led to refer to the children,’ he returned, ‘with all the confidence of advancing a conclusive argument, because from the mouths of babes and sucklings God ordains praise; and your language is an admission that you are falling beneath the power of the truth. Oh, my dear Mr. Pawley, don’t resist it - yield and obey. Your mind is wandering in the blackness of darkness which characterised the pre-Reformation period; come out of it into the light of truth, into the liberty wherewith we have been made free, and all may yet be well. You have a wonderful mind, a gifted brain; it is a pity your genius should be misused and misapplied. It is no use fighting or resisting - you must be conquered. Lay down the arms of your rebellion, and the angels of heaven will rejoice while we thank God for your conversion.’

It was only the intensely painful fervour of the speaker that restrained Pawley from smiling now, but he had too much respect for honest conviction, however mistaken he might consider it to be, to find therein a subject for ridicule. At the same time, recognising the futility of any attempt at reconciliation, he determined to abandon it at once.

‘I think we are both making a mistake and wasting time,’ he replied, as Aucott took hold of his hand and indicated that they should kneel in answer to his suggestion. Perhaps, however, I am able to understand you somewhat better than you are able to grasp my position. We look at this matter from very different points of view; the one you now occupy I abandoned - was compelled to abandon by clear conviction - many years ago, and it is impossible for me to return to it without doing violence to my conscience. I fully appreciate your interest and anxiety concerning me, and though you may not think it, I am very grateful for the honest endeavour you have made to turn my mind, but further discussion would be useless. We must agree to differ; it would be wrong for me to accept what you believe to be the truth, and I am equally convinced that it is impossible for you, at present, to accept my

ideas. Let us be friends, however, even in our differences, and so show that each of us, in a measure, possess the mind of Christ.'

'But you are still determined to go on the Common again on Sunday?'

'I must my friend; for me to stop away would be to run away from Christ and duty.'

'I wish you would be persuaded.'

'I am thoroughly persuaded in my own mind that it is my duty to go, and that being so, even were my wife to entreat me I should be compelled to deny her wish.'

'You will repent it.'

'Why? Have you any particular reason for saying so?'

'I have; and it is the interest I have in your welfare that causes me no little anxiety as to the result. I wish you would listen to my advice and give me credit for having no motive apart from your own well-being.'

'I will readily do that, and if you can urge any good and sufficient reason why I should not go, I will honestly take your advice.'

'I have already told you that no one apart from my family knows of my visit, neither am I in any way betraying a trust in the purpose for which I have come. I cannot agree with your views, but at the same time I hold myself equally free from others and prefer to act as a kind of free lance according as the hand of the Lord shall guide me. There are, however, times when all sections of believers on the Common are drawn together in a united cause, and in this way I have become acquainted with what is proposed for next Sunday in order to rob you of what certain opponents of the truth call your victory last week. Two or three persons have made it their business to call upon the present minister of Mount Pisgah respecting what you said about commencing some services for them on the Common.'

'They will not get much satisfaction for their hopes in that quarter,' replied Pawley.

'I don't know. There is something very wrong somewhere. Mr. Randall says he does not know you, has searched through the membership book of Mount Pisgah Church and does not find your name there, neither does he know anything about the meetings you refer to.'

Pawley looked with incredulous astonishment at his friend as he made the last statement.

'You have done me a great service - one I am not likely to forget - in making this known to me,' he replied.

'I hope you will now see the advisability of not going on the Common until the matter is cleared up; for I can assure you the result will be more deplorable than you think.'

'You are right; it will be serious, but not for me. Someone has begun this inquiry in secret; I shall demand that it be openly carried to a termination at whatever may be the cost. I have nothing to fear and shall throw myself upon the justice of the public.'

'But there will be murder done.'

'I shall not do it.'

'No! But you may be the victim, and I want you to think of your wife and family.'

'God and truth come first, my friend. Both family and I are in His keeping.'

'Then you will not take my advice.'

'No I must be faithful, even unto death if He demands it.'

Aucott left him very sorrowfully, persuaded in his own mind that if the strange enthusiast knew the frequenters of the Common as well as he, he would come to a different determination. His error lay in his not knowing Pawley.

The useful hint was profitably taken advantage of in preparing such evidence as would surprise the attack which was intended to cover him with such confusion. It was another plot of the Assyrian to 'come down like a wolf on the fold,' and Pawley could imagine the anticipatory relish with which the feast was already being prospectively enjoyed, all unconscious of the fact that the prophet in his bed-chamber knew all that the king purposed in his heart. Well might the intended victim smile complacently and ask himself as one of old, 'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.'

And the day of battle drew on.

On the Saturday night Ernest had a second visitor, unexpectedly conveying to him further details of the morrow's programme. He was a member of that peculiar grade of individuals who are difficult to classify, resembling and yet differing from either the costermonger, dockyard labourer, or the hooligan.

'Yo' are the bloke as wor knocked aat on the Common liast Sunday, aren't yer?' he inquired.

'I did get in a bit of a scuffle,' he replied; 'but what is your particular interest concerning it?'

'I'll soon tell yer. I've come to see if yer want any 'elp for to-morrer?'

'In what way?'

'In the pertection way.'

'No, thank you. I think I am fairly well protected.'

‘An’ yer’ll ha’ ter be, I can tell yer.’ Look ‘ere; there’s bin a bloke darn Dep’ford as is a-goin’ ter gi’ a lot o’ ar fellers a coach wheel ter toppe yer if yer begin ter spart agin. So I thought as ar it ‘ud make things a bit fair like if yer’d gi’ me another five bob to knock t’others art.’

‘Do you mean to tell me that some of your friends are to have five shillings to come on to the Common to fight?’

‘That’s abart it, so strike me lucky. The chap that’s got the kibosh told me to hisself.’

‘Why should he tell you such a thing?’

‘Lawd, we awliss does it ter-elp one another ter a drink. A fight’s nothin’ if we can get a drink arter it.’

‘Drinking is not in my line, and I am sure I should not give you one for such a work.’

‘Then yer don’t want us?’

‘No, thank you.’

‘Awl reight; but it’ll be God ‘elp yer, if yer think yer’ll be able ter wark ‘ome arter what yer’ll get.’

Though he spurned the proffered assistance Pawley took the precaution to profit by the information, which he reported to the Superintendent of the Common, and afterwards found he was more than justified in doing so, as events proved that there was more truth in it than he was at first inclined to believe.

During the week he had had a light but strong stand built for his purposes, and when at length he stepped upon it in the centre of a larger crowd than he addressed on the previous Sunday he was as calm and apparently unconscious as ever of the pent-up storm awaiting him. His quick eye noted the fact that Dance had gathered all his force immediately in front of the platform in a compact mass, and the removal of his hat as a preliminary to beginning gave the evident cue for the attack to open.

‘You wait a bit, my little cock-sparrow,’ roared the champion; it’s our turn to-day, and I’ve got a bone to pick with you before you will be allowed to say anything else.’

‘I was about to ask if anyone had anything to say in relation to our interrupted subject of last Sunday,’ he replied quietly, ‘and if that is your intention I shall be glad to hear it.’

‘I want you to know you are not stuffin’ geese when you come here; we’re men able to put two and two together.’

‘I am glad to hear it. Whatever I may have to say I am willing to accept the verdict of intelligence upon.’

‘We’ve got a tough nut for your gorilla jaws this time, but will you have to crack it,

or we will crack you.'

Pawley saw through his device to appeal to the risible faculty of the crowd, and at once determined to disarm and forestall his intention.

'I am glad to note the rapid evolution which has taken place in a fortnight,' he replied, his twinkling eye calling attention to the mischief of his mind. 'At that time development had only reached the swine stage.' The thrust went home, and a hurricane of ridicule fell like an avalanche on poor Dance. 'We are gorillas to-day.' Another outburst. 'It is now growing hopeful that we may arrive at manhood and decency presently. Let us proceed.'

The repartee was too quick and keen for the lumbering antagonist, and he had the grace not to make another hazard in that direction. The advantage so far was decidedly with Pawley.

'I don't want to be hard on you, nor do I want to make any mistake - ' began Dance, but someone interrupted him with, -

'You have just done that.'

'Have I? That's all you know.' Then, directing his remark to Pawley, 'Will you let me ask you to repeat the statement you make last Sunday about this Common and yourself ten years ago?'

'Certainly. I said I was not altogether a stranger, since ten years ago I began a series of religious meetings here under the auspices of Mount Pisgah Church. I am well aware that they only continued through one summer, and but few of you may be able to remember them.'

'And I say you're a liar! That's flat.'

The denunciation failed to produce quite the sensation Dance anticipated, and no one was more conscious of it than himself and his immediate friends. The crowd knew him too well to take him seriously, and judged the move to be one of his stage tricks to call attention to something he had behind.

'There is no necessity for any coarse language or vulgar epithets,' replied Pawley quietly, 'but, gentlemen, if you will at once constitute yourselves into a public court, I am prepared to lay the evidence before you, and you may decide this matter for yourselves.'

'We don't want your evidence,' roared Dance; 'we have been to Mr. Randall, and he knows nothing about you. We have seen the membership roll, and your name is not there.'

'But I am sure I shall be safe in appealing to the proverbial sense of fair play in demanding a right to reply. I will say nothing of what I think as to the way you have proceeded so far in my absence, but I have an undoubted right to speak in my own defence.'

'You have nothing to say. Down with him!' cried the D.D., warmly supported in a rush by his followers.

But the information Pawley had given to the Superintendent of the Common, at the same time wisely offering to leave himself in the hands of the authorities, had secured the presence of a number of police in uniform and plain clothes, and the instant the movement was inaugurated a most unexpected opposition presented itself, and Dance was promptly cautioned as to what he might be held responsible for.

'Another Lucifer!' yelled someone.

The theologian had evidently fallen upon evil days, but Pawley took no notice of it.

'Gentlemen,' he proceeded with as little delay as possible, one of the most serious charges you are able to make against a public man - that of wilfully lying - has been made against myself, and you are asked to accept and act upon it without hearing my reply. I have an answer to make which I am sure you will find to be full and sufficient, and if you will hear me - as I am sure you will - there need be no thought of resorting to physical force to remove me from your midst. If I do not clear myself entirely from this aspersion I will accept your verdict and never again will I attempt to address you.'

This caused a further feeling of confidence in him, and there was on every hand a perceptible determination to sift the matter to the bottom.

'In doing this, fortunately it will not be necessary for me to say anything in my own defence, but the matter may be settled at once by the testimony of two of yourselves who knew me then and are quite able to identify me now. But before asking these gentlemen to say whether I have spoken the truth or not, allow me to refer to the answer Mr. Randall has given to your inquiries. He is quite right when he says he knows nothing of me, for at the time I speak of, Mr. Pinchbeck - who has now been dead some eight years, I believe - was minister at Mount Pisgah, therefore Mr. Randall, who has been here but two years, can know nothing one way or the other. Further, I have evidence of a conclusive nature I might perhaps lay before you, but I have no wish to revive painful circumstances now happily forgotten, but will at once ask Mr. Bernard Victor, who took part in those services, and was a member of Mount Pisgah Church, whether what I say is true or false.'

'I have no wish in any way to be drawn into any unpleasant controversy,' replied Victor, but common honesty demands my saying that I introduced you to the church you name, of which I am still a member, and that you did hold such services through the whole of one summer.'

Pawley had anticipated a manifestation from the crowd on hearing the announcement, and almost before Victor had finished he was saying, -

‘I will also ask a gentleman whose voice I am sure you will respect, though he is not a member of the church, but one of your respected tradesmen - I refer to Mr. Gerhard.’

This appeal was even more popular than the former and before he had time to answer a mighty roar of applause broke forth.

‘Of course I know you and many others who stand around have good cause to remember you and the work you did - and, what is more, we are glad to see you back again.’

‘Gentlemen,’ resumed Pawley, ‘I don’t think we have need to carry this inquiry further. I will simply ask if you are satisfied that the statement I made to you was true?’

‘Yes, quite true,’ rose in a roar like thunder.

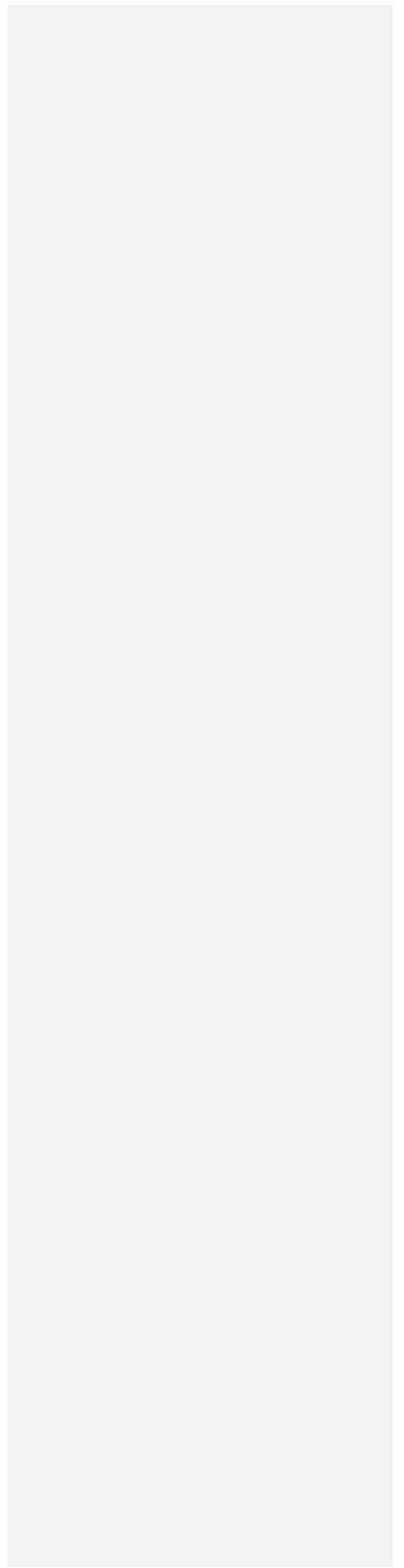
‘Then that is enough, and I pray you to let the accusations be forgotten.’

Defeated, wounded, laughed at, but still determined to prevent the Heretic being heard without interruption, the opposition retired to the old battle-ground of dogma. Pawley had won the contest, captured Dance’s laurels, and if the great champion ever possessed any charity he lost the last trace of it about the same time. Henceforth he and his discontinued any regular meetings and hung around those of Pawley, and the subsidised gang from Deptford took every possible opportunity of enforcing the arguments for which they were retained. For months there were few Sundays when blood was not shed, and the speaker was the man who suffered most, since he had not yet gathered friends so closely round him as to make them willing to intervene in his cause. On one occasion he was so roughly handled that he lay for several minutes in an unconscious state upon the Common, and his friends were fearful that the worst had happened.

Pawley, however, in spite of difficulties and opposition held on; he knew the end would come and his testimony to the truth prevail. His appeal was to reason, history, evidences and an unchanging God. His infallibility was to be found in the Eternal and Immutable rather than in a book or the decisions of councils.

His standard of Christianity was to be seen in life rather than profession. When he had wearied and silenced his carping critics, either by patient endurance or on occasion by his whip of small sharp cords, he always had a multitude of honest inquiries, doubts and difficulties to reply to; but it was soon discovered that, contrary to the custom of the theorists, he had a consistent ‘because’ for every ‘why,’ and was always most particular to establish and maintain logical connections and so present his gospel in a compact and concrete form. The problems of life were simplified, the mysticism of religion vanished, truth sparkled and flashed around his every subject, men who had long boasted of themselves as agnostics found a new interest in old subjects, and gradually there evolved out of the crowd of men once disgusted with everything bearing a relation to religion, an earnest band of admirers

who finally routed all opposition and left intelligent inquiries free to listen to the welcome message proclaimed by the new prophet of Brixham Common.



Chapter XXXIX - 'In Remembrance Of Me'

Our hero's life at this period can scarcely be described as one of luxurious indolence. He had to be astir almost before he had lost the sense of yesterday's weariness, and after an apology for a breakfast - necessitated in contributing to the supply of the mysterious forces he used in his healing work - he started on his ever-increasing round of visits. In this department of his labours success crowded upon the heels of success, and applications for his help poured in upon him with sorrowful frequency because his powers were so inadequate to the demand. All men and women who heard of him in their affliction sought and implored his aid, not from the glowing testimonials of expensive advertisements - he had no need of such laudations. He could not be hid on account of the results that followed his almost miraculous touch. Still he did not cure in every case; in some he only succeeded in giving relief, in others scarcely so much as that, and yet again from lack of the needed sympathy he was occasionally compelled to turn aside, conscious that he was able to do nothing. No one but himself knew how much he grieved at such times, almost to the loss of gratitude for the results he so frequently accomplished, but it kept him painfully reminded of how far he fell below the ideal possibility the follower of Christ might reach when he would be able to do all things through the promised strength of his Master. Whatever lay behind him, like Paul, he could not count himself to have attained, but had to continually press forward towards the mark which loomed in the distant future.

But this sorrowful regret was his own secret. Elinor seldom caught a glimpse of its shadow, and little dreamed of its abiding presence with her husband. To his patients he always had the same smiling face, encouraging word and tender sympathy. He very seldom spoke to them on religious topics, but if they arose naturally, as was not unfrequent, he always managed to express himself in some original thought that would linger and find food for meditation after he had gone. Any reference to his abnormal powers would instantly evoke a reply that the results achieved were in no sense due to himself; he was nothing more than a link between the patient's need and the answering Love which stood unseen behind every unit in the great mass of humanity. The weakness, the imperfections and the failures were always his own, the rest was due to God and the sufferer.

The days were well-nigh spent before he was able to get home again, but his work was not yet done. After a brief hour for well-earned rest and refreshment, on two evenings of the week he would see ten, twelve and occasionally even more impecunious cases as were able to visit him at home. In these instances he would have the willing assistance of Elinor, who, with her ready woman's tact, would discover the actual circumstances of each individual and administer such physical comforts as were demanded to assist her husband's efforts. It is astonishing how much suffering might be alleviated, maladies eradicated, and health resuscitated by

judicious and sympathetic help in this direction; wise counsel simple, suggestions and common-sense assistance, either in clothing, food or fresh air, given naturally and free from the irritating wrappers of patronage or charity, are wonderfully powerful restoratives, and Elinor knew how to dispense such with a cunning and effective hand.

A third evening, and presently a fourth had to be devoted to persons who wished to see him with inquiries respecting his meetings on the Common. It must needs be that such a work gave rise to innumerable questions and ideas that were not suitable for public discussion, and he was too anxious to protect and encourage all reviving interests not to make some kind of provision for such as cared to pursue these questions under more congenial conditions. These quiet and informal conferences, from which everything of a pedantic character was carefully excluded, at once became a valued institution, where Pawley appeared in a new and even more fascinating character than in his public discourses. The burning declamation of abuses, the stinging satire of hypocrisy and formalism, his keen critical analysis of dogma and assumption, and the multitude of detail so essential for the Common were not needed in the home, but the softer, clinging, and tenaciously affectionate side of his nature came into prominence; the enthusiastic Peter was lost in the beloved John, the battle ground gave place for the nonce to the upper room, and with the change he was able to present his divine Lord in another light, too sacred and ineffable for vulgar eyes to look upon.

The secret and at first inexplicable attractiveness of the man, as he appeared at such times, was no doubt to be accounted for by the exclusion of combative influences against which he had to protect himself outside, and consequently he was able to yield himself more completely into the control of the angel friends whose presence was gradually intersphering his life and work. In himself, and to the favoured few with whom he ventured to speak freely of his experiences in this direction, the certainty of this mysterious combination had long passed the stage of doubt or experiment, and during the weekly gatherings not a few of the initiated were frequently perplexed at the strange transformation he sometimes presented, reminding one of that peculiar metamorphosis of which Samuel spoke in relation to the ancient Hebrew prophets: 'The spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be changed into another man.' At such times he impressed one with the idea of lambent gleams of immortality playing around him, his eyes appeared to be opened to the invisible, his understanding grasped the eternal, and his Bible became flooded with the inspiration of a new revelation compelling acquiescence. His lifting up of the Christ as a model of idealised humanity was a fascination not to be resisted; in his exaltation he entered into the mind and heart of his Master so completely as to create a music in his inviting tone, and a modulation of voice which thrilled all who heard him with a desire for the life he portrayed, and gave a bread for their hungry souls such as they received with joy and gratitude.

The whisper of these reunions spread around, and many eager applications were made for admission but they were not for the crowd of common people - such moments were for the rest and upbuilding of the favoured disciples, who valued the opportunity too highly to leave room for outsiders, even though Elinor had been willing to admit them.

Presently a minister called to satisfy himself as to the secret influence of the man who, in spite of his heresy and opposition, had secured so much power over the people. He had listened to Pawley, like many of his co-pastors, on the Common, and scarcely knew what estimate to place upon him, but the reports he had heard from other sources made him desirous to be brought into closer contact. He begged to be allowed to come again, and at the third visit brought a friend, with the result that Friday evening in each week was set apart as being specially devoted to those engaged in preaching, and his labours among the family of Nicodemus - for these were only secret disciples, steadfastly refusing to acknowledge him openly - was not the least encouraging in its fruit. But Pawley was not a popularity hunter, he was quite willing to decrease if Christ would only increase, and the seed he was able to scatter in the garden of these teachers' minds, he could see, was springing up and producing fruit for the kingdom. Five nights were thus provided for in every week, and the sixth had to be given to a continuance of his work among the outcast and fallen. His friends persuaded him to take this for the rest every one saw was so necessary for his health and comfort, but they succeeded only so far as to gain his consent to spend the night on alternate weeks nearer home, instead of going to Piccadilly or the Seven Dials.

In this busy, ceaseless, unbroken activity, Elinor lost the quiet charm of her old home life, and the husband who had been by so much the larger part of her life was no longer her own, but others seemed to have a certain legitimate claim in his possession. At first the thought of it was very tender, but her love for him had been refined by her love for a Greater than he, and but little of selfishness was left behind. In her secret meditations she had appeared to catch a vibration from afar of the intense yearning of her Master for the welfare of wayward souls; she did not feel able to go after such, knew her inability to deal with them, had a hundred other more pressing claims upon her in her home, but she could lighten her husband's labours by not only consenting to give him up to the work to which he was so manifestly called, but also encouraging and assisting him so far as came within her scope in its performance. Her willingness to lose him was not that she loved him less, but rather that she had grown to love her Master more, and the sacrifice she made was the consecrated evidence thereof. God had done wonderful things for her, whereof she was glad, and the gladness was not only of the lips, but bore this fruit in her life, into which it had introduced a sweetness only one could appreciate who had come to it after the trials and difficulties of a weary and painful pilgrimage. The man into whose life her own had been so successfully engrafted, whose interest was her ambition, and in whose welfare her own was lost, had, after many

misunderstandings and disappointments, won appreciation, his apparently unvarying misfortunes had come to an end, the systematic defeats against which he had so long and unsuccessfully contended had been at last overcome, the valleys of humiliation and of the shadow of death with all their fears and terrors lay behind him, and the daybreak was at hand; the single-handed warrior had found that he who fights alone with God fights with the victorious majority though all earth and hell are leagued against him. Her husband now had admirers, supporters, friends in numbers who were not only willing to have his acquaintance but proud to acknowledge it, and Elinor, with all the unselfish love of a true wife, found in that the grandest, most precious gift the earth had power to lay at her feet.

The only moments she could now call her own were on Sunday evening, when the meeting on the Common was over - frequently after seven o'clock - then, weary and worn out by his three and often four hours' ministry to as many thousand patient and inquiring hearers, he would unbuckle his armour, lay aside his sword, and rest with those who loved him because they knew him best.

If it is true that the real value of a man is to be appraised at the estimate in which he is held by his family and most intimate friends, then Ernest Pawley must be ranked as a noble specimen of humanity, for those who knew him within that circle - where a man is to be seen free from any artificial touches, by which we oftentimes even deceive ourselves - had the highest and noblest opinion of him. If the children had the presence of their father, toys and games and books were forgotten in the greater pleasure; and when Elinor had her husband she was fully satisfied.

And Ernest - was he satisfied with the success he had achieved and the work he was doing? No! His life was one of melodious thanksgiving, but he continued to climb as he sang, and every peak he attained only brought others, still possible, into view. He had now broken the seal of St. Clear's once incomprehensible declaration of the actuality of 'all things possible', and the literal infinitude of the promise lay unrolled before him. The vision endowed him with increased powers, the springs at which he slaked the thirst of his aspiring soul also created another thirst which only a draught from purer streams could satisfy. His being thrilled with powers almost omnipotent, he feasted upon food the world knew not of, springs and issues of life opened before him, and he breathed secrets of God with every inspiration; the accounted treasures and coveted things of earth were burdens and obstacles to be despised, the very atmosphere that blew across them dimmed the glory with which heaven's clearer sun bathed and purified his soul. He had climbed to the heights of the marvellous light of God, and while, with added music to the natural eloquence of his tongue he appealed to those who followed to come after him, he kept his eye faithfully upon the Guide who went before, leading into the fulness of the truth with peace and joy.

This restless, eager, holy ambition was watched with grave concern by his most intimate friends. There is a point in every soul's development where it is essential

that the mortal shall put on immortality - a line of demarcation beyond which flesh and blood cannot pass, and the strain which its unremitting labours was putting upon his physical powers, and the exaltation which, on the other hand, lifted him above the earthly in his spiritual experiences, occasioned much anxious thought. It was no use to speak to him; the eternal had its grip upon him, and sympathy therewith was gradually wooing him away. But his work would be left - a work only just begun to be estimated at its real value; the light had but just shone - was it only to flicker for a moment, then die away into a blackness all the deeper because of the momentary illumination?

In the difficulty Elinor consented to meet a few friends to discuss what was best to be done.

The marvellous results he had obtained in the treatment of diseases had been frequently mentioned to members of the council of a prominent society interested in psychological phenomena, and among the few who met to consult how best to reduce the wear and tear he was suffering from, was Arthur Deal, one of the members of the said council, who had been secretly watching Pawley's career for some time. The meetings on the Common always afforded a plausible ground for introduction, and between Deal and Pawley a very warm friendship had for some time existed without the latter having any idea of his friend's connection or purpose. Now, however, that it was necessary to do something, Deal was in a position to make a proposition valuable in more ways than one. His council were willing to place one of their rooms, very centrally situated, at Pawley's disposal for his treatments; this would save both time and fatigue in travelling for such cases as could visit him, and at the same time enable a systematic observance of his work and results to be recorded. The suggestion was adopted with wonderful advantage, and though a membership of the society was presently offered as a testimony of appreciation of the work he was doing, at St. Clear's suggestion it was deemed advisable to decline the honour.

From this association Pawley formed the one great friendship of his life akin to that which is recorded of David and Jonathan. It began with the receipt of the following letter: -

OAKHURST, ST. LEONARD'S-ON-SEA,

'October 30, 18 - .

Dear Sir, - Your name has been mentioned to me by Mr. Allan Garthorp in connection with your gift of healing. My husband, who is a clergyman, has been an invalid for many years, having gradually lost the use of his muscles, due it is believed to an accident when a boy. He does not usually suffer any pain, but occasionally loses all control of his limbs, and falls, should he be taking his laborious exercise at the time. After such accidents he is entirely laid up for weeks, but never quite recovers his former strength. Yesterday he met with such a fall, more serious, I fear, than he has yet suffered. Would it be possible for you to come and see him, and tell

us if you can give him any help? I know this is asking a great deal, but from what Mr. G. said, I do not think it is more than you will be willing to do for Christ's sake and the good of the sufferer.

'Awaiting what I hope will be a favourable reply, I am, Dear Sir, yours truly,

MARION HOLMES.'

The letter came just as the meetings on the Common had been discontinued for the year, and St. Clear suggested that Pawley should offer to go to St. Leonard's on the following Sunday, an arrangement that was at once made, and the visit proved to be memorable in more than one respect.

Some friendships approach and meet in long avenues of watchful caution, stepping forward with measured tread while careful note is made of the advancing figure upon whom the lights and shadows of doubt play through the trees of opportunity, and hands are clasped to seal the compact only when the heart is strengthened into confidence by experience; others meet suddenly, springing up from either side of the crest of a hill over which both hearts and hands meet in an inspirational grip. Of this latter kind was the friendship between Frederic Holmes and Ernest Pawley. It was one of those kinships too intense for long endurance in the flesh, and yet permitted as a ray of heaven flooding part of the landscape of earth.

Years of creeping, irritating affliction, exasperating in its cunning insidiousness, yet all the more effective because of its elusiveness, though powerless to destroy the lineaments of an attractive form had robbed it of all physical energies and vigour, but the soul had purified and expanded in the trial. It was a pathetically melancholy sight to Pawley as he first beheld his patient, half-sitting, half-reclining in a chair upon which the inventive Carter had exercised his genius. The cheeks were nervously pale with an eager, doubtful hope, and from the great depths of the soft blue-violet eyes an unspoken welcome beamed. Pawley stepped forward and took the feebly outstretched hand in a warm, lingering clasp; heart spake to heart and soul to soul through the medium of their eyes, but neither spoke a word. The only sound they made was a twin sigh, though each felt already stronger and better for the meeting. A something had come into the life of each - a new experience was born, a wish was gratified, a desire attained, a prayer answered. It was not a time for speech. There was nothing incongruous in that lingering silence - it was natural, eloquent, the one thing required, and it must needs be allowed to speak its message. It was the re-union point of kindred souls - had they once been one and severed in the unremembered past, gravitating to each other, the one through the furnace pilgrimage of ever-increasing physical disability, and the other by the perhaps sharper fiery path of poverty and persecution? Who knows the secrets of the past sufficiently to answer? But this much was evident, in the process of perfecting through suffering, the new name of the Master had been burned into the forehead of each, and as their eyes met they caught the reflected image of Him they loved

binding their lives in one.

It was the usual custom at Oakhurst for the afflicted clergyman to dispense the eucharist to his family on Sunday mornings, but to-day it had been delayed an hour that Pawley might join in the service. Should he - could he consistently do so? Many years had passed since he had taken part in that awfully solemn rite, and we can well remember the reasons he had assigned to Tressey and Gradeley for his abstention. In his connection with Mount Pisgah he had never broken his rule. Should he do so now? Had the way by which his Lord had brought him enabled him to reach such a point of renunciation that he could say his all was upon the altar, and in eating of that bread and drinking of that cup could he say from his very heart, without reservation or equivocation, 'Thy will be done'? Was he prepared to go forward to judgment and to death if need be? to enter into that new covenant ready to seal it with his blood if his Lord should desire it? These questions, and others, rose before him, and he answered them. Then he knelt, ate and drank.

In the afternoon he gave careful and very prayerful attention to the case of his patient, but he dare not hold out any further hope than that of relief; but the physically-expected blessing was almost lost sight of in the spiritual benediction which appeared to fall upon the household, and Pawley himself returned home with the consciousness that he too had been richly blessed.

Throughout the whole of that winter every Sunday was spent at St. Leonard's, sometimes alone, at others accompanied by Elinor. More than anticipated results were realised physically, but the principal value of those days was in the spiritual food dispensed.

Presently the spring came round again and Pawley was compelled to look forward to a renewal of his work upon the Common, a prospect which filled the heart of his friend with a sadness more bitter than death. The souls of the two men were knit together, but while in their separation Pawley would be strengthened and helped in the engrossing interest of his work, poor Holmes would be disconsolate and alone. Such a contemplation had a serious effect upon his health. He could not again be separated from his friend at a time when he had even come to regard such a possibility as a restoration of the use of his limbs, therefore he determined that he too would go to London, and so convert the coming season into an added blessing in place of a disappointment.

Pawley was more than glad at the unanticipated decision, and shortly afterwards the two were able to see each other nearly every day.

Chapter XL - Solving A Financial Difficulty

The fourth season of meetings on Brixham Common opened at least a month earlier than usual. March came in with a smiling, alluring face, as to be almost

mistaken for her more genial sister, May, and with its second Sunday, as bright, warm and seductive as its predecessor, people wandered on to the Common and began to discuss the prospects of opening the campaign. Pawley was approached, and though he shook his head doubtfully at the wisdom of trusting to a continuance of such unexpected weather, he was not a little pleased to see the eager anticipation with which the commencement of his work was regarded. So acting on the principle that it is always best to minister to healthy appetites as soon as possible, he promised, should the weather continue, to start his lectures on the following Sunday.

The news spread far and wide, and the day was everything to be desired, when he who by this time came to be known as the Bishop of Brixham Common - some even went so far as to call him Pope, using the word more in its paternal than ecclesiastical sense - received a glad and enthusiastic welcome back to his diocese.

On the second Sunday, however, the weather bore striking evidence to the unwisdom of their proceeding; the sky was heavy with threatening clouds, but since no rain had as yet fallen, it was decided to go forward and hope the signs would be falsified at least for an hour or so. Ten minutes later, just as Pawley had grounded himself in his argument, the heavens began to weep.

‘I think it will be wise to adjourn till next Sunday,’ he suggested.

‘It is only a sprinkle to test our earnestness. We can stand it if you can,’ responded a voice from the outer edge of a considerable crowd. And a general murmur of concurrence induced him to continue until the rain passed over and the sun came forth as if to bestow a reward upon the faith which had stood the test so nobly.

That shower revived an inquiry that was mooted too late in the previous session to be considered. Scores - hundreds of Pawley's regular congregation were impressed with the sterling value of his energetic services, and the thought of a break in his work for the whole of the Autumn and winter was not a welcome one; but when the question arose as to how it could be avoided innumerable difficulties started into view, and very reluctantly the consideration of the matter had to be postponed. It had now been revived - the hope that something would be done to establish his work upon a permanent basis, but with the desire the spectre of its attendant difficulties also returned.

To secure premises such as would allow the establishment of a work upon the fraternal basis of Pawley's programme, which he insisted was the only practical aspect of Christianity, required a fairly substantial outlay. Where was this to come from? The Bishop, as we know, had no capital, and though his friend Holmes was willing to make more than a generous contribution towards the project, such an offer only opened the subscription but in no way realised its necessity for the purpose aimed at. As for the promoters of the idea, it was asseverated with certainty that the work would be more than self-supporting, but no one could suggest as to how the capital to begin should be raised. Pawley's genius was left to work that out, and the

season wore away in his attempt to do so. Conscious how much more it would enable him to do than at present, he was anxious to find some solution, and ever and again made reference to it in his addresses, or discussed it with his intimates, who were interested in the scheme, but nothing practical evolved.

Elinor was divided in her mind as to what was advisable even if the way was opened. The closer circle of friends frequently discussed the question and were of unanimous opinion that such a permanent work, with Pawley's wholehearted enthusiasm, would lead him to attempt too much, and in the end prove to be a hindrance rather than assistance. But when the matter was referred to St. Clear, he saw that whatever the future held the hour had not yet come - it might be near or distant, that he did not say. No doubt God would lead to developments, but whether he had any idea of them or not he volunteered no information. His counsel was to prayerfully watch and wait, but always to stand ready, that when the pillar of cloud moved forward all who were faithful should be found prepared to move with it, not in doubt, but confident that God, who knew the end from the beginning, would do what was right and best.

Such illustrates the advice given and the position St. Clear and his friends assumed in their relationship with Ernest at this point. It was counsel, not command, he received; between him and his God there stood but one Mediator, the rest were faithful friends and fellow-servants who communed, but after that very studiously left him free to act. Experience, however, had taught Pawley that they saw and understood in a clearer light, and his interests were best served when he followed their indications. Therefore he continued his work, and while doing so watched and waited, but always with his loins girded and his staff within his hand.

The first Sunday in August in that year was a day momentous in the history of Pawley's career. He was discoursing on that perennial subject of discussion, Justification by Faith, which was no sooner complacently disposed of in one aspect than it arose in another, and demanded fresh treatment from some unexpected point of view. Still it was not an unwelcome theme, and he handled it with all the freedom of long acquaintance and careful study. It was a subject on which he was always certain to be heard at his best, but on that particular occasion, when he was contrasting his own views of the question with orthodox credulity on the one hand and vulgar, arrogant impudence on the other, he perhaps surpassed any previous effort he had made at Brixham. His arguments went straight home with the force and effect of thunderbolts, even while he wooed his hearers to venture on the faith he set forth with all the alluring fascination of a siren; and when he concluded an argument he had sustained for ninety minutes without an effort he met with the unique experience of his meeting breaking up without either a question or a single attempt to controvert his opinion.

Astonished more than anyone at the result, he stepped from his platform and took the proffered hand of Holmes whose bath-chair was now always close beside

the stand.

‘I was glad when you finished, old man,’ said his friend. ‘I was awfully afraid you would not be able to sustain yourself.’

‘There was no fear of that; with the spirit of God playing upon and through me, and the everlasting arms beneath, I was all right.’

‘I am glad I left St. Leonard’s if it was only to hear that one discourse.’

‘I am glad the people heard it, because I know it has done its work. I wonder why it is, when we see things so plainly as it was put before us this afternoon, that we don’t accept and act upon them.’

It was a frequent habit of his to discuss his own utterances purely in the light of one of the hearers rather than as the speaker, positively disassociating himself from the latter individuality and relegating the power and forcefulness to God alone; and they who knew him also knew that it arose from the honest humility of the man, who acknowledged with profound gratitude the fulfilment in his own experience of the promise of his Lord - ‘It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of My Father which speaketh in you.’ He always referred to the lecturer, in his conversation with friends, in the third person, therefore Holmes took no notice of his otherwise strange observation as he ventured to caution him.

‘But look here, old man, you mustn’t do that sort of thing too often in the open air. It’s just enough to kill a man, you know.’

‘I don’t know,’ he replied, ‘but God does, and He never makes a mistake.’

‘Pa!’ exclaimed one of his sons, who came up at that instant. ‘Two gentlemen are anxious to speak to you if you can spare the time.’

He apologised to his friend, then turned and acknowledged the salutations of two strangers who were following him.

‘I must ask you to pardon our intrusion at such a moment,’ said the elder of the two, handing him cards upon which were engraved the names of Augustus Callenberg and F. D. Archbold respectively, but we have a matter of the utmost importance to ourselves we are anxious to bring under your notice, and could only learn your address as being here on Sunday afternoon. All we will now trouble you for is to know when and where we may meet you.’

Pawley pleasantly shrugged his shoulders in his indecision about making an appointment.

‘The present is generally my best time,’ he replied.

‘But our business has no kind of connection with the subject of your meeting.’

‘I need not ask you whether it is honourable and legitimate,’ he asked, carefully regarding their evident position.

‘Of that you may rest assured. I was thinking of your recent effort, and probably your objection to turn your mind abruptly to matters you may consider irrelevant to the day.’

‘I am neither faddist nor bigot,’ he replied, ‘in my religious ideas; the distinction I draw is rather between right and wrong than sacred and secular; all that is right is inevitably sacred in my opinion. If therefore your business is right I shall be pleased to attend to it now as far as it may be in my power.’

‘It is of a strictly confidential nature, I might suggest,’ answered Mr. Callenberg, as an excuse for not at once proceeding with it.

‘In that case will you walk home with me? My house is only on the edge of the Common.’

‘With pleasure.’

As they walked the elder man chatted freely with the preacher about his work among the people, the extension of the neighbourhood and other local matters, but Archbold never ventured a word after he had acknowledged Pawley. He, no doubt, had a certain aversion for open-air orators, or at least so impressed our friend, and it was only through the hope of personal advantage he was constrained to walk so far in his company. Pawley was perfectly sensible of the feeling with which he was regarded, which acted upon him like an atmospheric depression upon a barometer, and even placed him at a disadvantage in his conversation with Callenberg. But the walk was not a long one, and Archbold had to recognise that he had come to ask for a favour rather than bestow a patronage, since St. Clear made his presence known to his fellow worker, translating Pawley into the superior position.

‘Be seated, gentlemen,’ said Ernest, as he closed the door of his unpretentious drawing-room. Now I shall be glad to know this business upon which you desire to consult me.’

‘Perhaps it will suffice, until we know the light in which you regard our proposition, if we simply say we are directors of a large financial trust in the city, without mentioning its particular name.’

‘I think it will be well for us to be perfectly frank with each other,’ Pawley answered, with one of his pleasant smiles. ‘I think you represent the International Finance Corporation.’

‘Why were you not honest with us and say you knew us from the beginning?’ asked Archbold, resenting what he conceived to be a possible lack of candour on Pawley’s part.

‘I think you have no reason to complain in that respect,’ he replied.

‘But why did you not tell us we were known to you from the first?’

‘Because I did not know you,’ he returned, not a little amused at their

bewilderment.

‘May I be allowed to ask how it is you know us now?’

This inquiry came from Mr. Callenberg, who, though not so disturbed as his friend, was certainly more deeply impressed by what had occurred.

‘I am sure you will excuse me entering into any needless explanations,’ Pawley answered quietly; ‘but unless I misunderstand your visit, it is to solicit my assistance, not to hear how or by what means I do the work God has given me to do.’

‘But we don’t want to lend ourselves to any hocus-pocus, fortune-telling business, you know,’ exclaimed Archbold.

‘Neither have I asked you to do so at present,’ calmly resented Pawley, as he rose from his seat, and perhaps it would be better to end the interview at once, before I attempt to throw any imagined spell over you.’

‘I pray you will reconsider that suggestion,’ pleaded Callenberg, and if my friend will leave the negotiations to you and I, I will promise not to detain you more than a few minutes.’

‘Let me ask you to bear in mind that you have sought me, and I must ask you to give me the respect due from one gentleman to another or it will be impossible to proceed.’

‘I hope I have already done so.’

Archbold made no reply, but was evidently content to leave the further discussion of the matter in the hands of his friend.

‘Will you let me hear your business as briefly as you can?’ asked Pawley, again inviting his visitors to be seated.

‘Since you know who we are,’ began Callenberg, ‘you will understand something of the enormous extent of our business, and also the collateral interest the Government has in our existence. But we have a skeleton in our cupboard in the shape of a mystery which has baffled the ingenuity of the experts, I may say of the whole world to solve.’

‘Indeed! What is it like?’

‘I need not tell you how careful we must necessarily be in every detail of our business, which is conducted by the best accountants available, and so divided and checked as to make errors, humanly speaking, impossible; but in spite of all our system there has been a mysterious but continuous leakage going on for nearly twenty years which neither examination of books nor the employment of detectives can discover or interfere with. Every legitimate source available has been employed, exhausted, and failed to throw any light upon the mystery, but your name was whispered into the ear of one of our Board as having been able to obtain some valuable information from ghosts or something of the sort, and when it was

mentioned at our last meeting another of our members recalled how Swedenborg was reported to be gifted with a similar power. But, to be brief, it was finally resolved that Mr. Archbold and myself should seek an interview and ask if you think it possible that you can by any means help us in our dilemma. I may say that in addition to a very substantial and immediate reward for success, a life provision providing a very comfortable living will be guaranteed, and therefore, if you do possess the powers attributed to you, the offer is one worthy of consideration.'

'Let me assure you in the first place,' Pawley answered, after a moment's consideration, 'that the thought of reward or pension will have no influence with me one way or the other. God, for some mysterious purpose, which He alone understands, has certainly endowed me with strange gifts to be used in accordance with guidance I receive from Him through certain appointed ministers with whom I am associated; but our services are not to be bought with gold or favours, but as God Himself sees His glory may be advanced.'

'Excuse me. I had no thought of a bribe.'

'I perfectly understand your position, and the offer you made was only a natural one, but I am very anxious that you should understand me. I have learned by an experience beyond argument that in God we have all things and abound; in the service of God I am preserved and cared for, very much more so, but upon the same principle as you propose to care for me if I can succeed in unravelling this mystery and so protect your interests. But there is this advantage. Men may change, our most sacred oaths and bonds may be broken; God never changes, His word cannot be broken, therefore I am more safe with Him, and that is why I say your reward and pension have no influence with me. I suppose your losses have been heavy?'

'Yes; more considerable, perhaps, than it is advisable to mention.'

'And have you no suspicion of anyone?'

'None. I suppose almost everyone connected with the Corporation has at some time fallen under the cloud but nothing has been discovered so far.'

'When is your next Board meeting?'

'To-morrow at noon.'

'Do you meet on the premises?'

'Yes.'

'Well, gentlemen, I have heard your request, but I can give you no answer now. As I tell you, I do not stand alone and shall have to consult my friends as to what shall be done. Of myself I am not able to help you in any way, but if they see that the solution of this enigma may in any sense help to rectify a wrong and further their cause of right, I have no doubt as to what the result will be. But for the present I can say no more. Should they, however, accede to your proposition, I will call upon you to-morrow at one o'clock.'

The two magnates were singularly reticent of speech in their drive westward; each was occupied with his own thoughts, and they were not sufficiently sympathetic to invite the confidence of the other. Archbold had from the first assumed the superior position, and in doing so had not only endangered their embassy for the moment but had suffered a personal defeat at the hands of the man he wished to patronise for policy's sake. Callenberg, though in many respects a kindred spirit with his friend, had been somewhat impressed with the power of Pawley in the discourse to which they had necessarily been compelled to listen, and, as we have seen, afterwards treated him with more consideration than he originally entertained towards a man who, though no doubt a charlatan, was a forlorn hope in their extremity. The latter disposition Pawley was always delighted to meet; honest doubt and even suspicion, if found in connection with an open mind, always possessed a certain attraction for him, and Callenberg was able to profit thereby, while the patronising spirit of his friend widened the breach at every turn and made approach impossible. Hence the one carried away a sullen silence in which he tried to hide his mortification, and the other food for reflection in the digestion of which he did not wish to be disturbed.

Coloured by such contrary feelings it may easily be conceived that the individual reports differed materially as laid before their fellow-directors on the following day, and the conclusion arrived at was that Archbold's statement was no doubt the more correct one and their new-born hope had only proved to be another mirage.

Presently a messenger entered and handed a card to Mr. Callenberg. The rigid placidity which is the recognised official facial expression of these princes of finance essayed to relax into an indication of a smile of satisfaction as he rose to his feet and calmly announced, - 'Mr. Chairman, it is with some little gratification after what has passed that I have to inform you that Mr. Ernest Pawley has arrived and awaits our pleasure.'

The speaker maintained his gravity with more success than those to whom he spoke. The persons constituting that Board were in the habit of discussing questions deciding the weal or woe of empires; within those four walls decisions were arrived at of more tremendous import than the victories of armies; kings were in no small measure subject to the ruling of those wills, and parliaments were compelled to acknowledge that throne; yet the announcement of the presence of an unknown, contemned and ridiculed preacher of righteousness produced a thrill of excitement empires might envy, and the name of Ernest Pawley abruptly stopped the deliberation in which the mandate of a king would have passed unheard.

But let us not misread the signs of the times; Pawley would raise ten thousand voices against such an error if he possessed them. We have distinctly seen - and the lesson has been again and again repeated - that of himself this insignificant heretic could do nothing. Had he gone into the building of the Corporation simply to pay a claim or cash a draft, he would have been an unrecognised circumstance in the day's transactions, only represented by the atomic result produced. But now he was there

as an ambassador of God, he represented the Eternal Emperor of all Finance, had come in an official capacity anent the question of stewardship, and, though unseen, the ordinary costume of the man of business was clothed upon by an authority before which the magnates of the International Finance Corporation must bow as lowly and reverently as those who were in the habit of craving consideration from their hands. The chariots and the cohorts of God were round about His servant; no wonder there was a thrill of excitement at his coming.

St Clear had been consulted, and in the mysterious providences of God saw his way to accept the proposition. The chances of success or failure constituted a daring test of Pawley's faith in those unseen powers operating in and through him, of which the world knew nothing but by results. But Pawley knew, and had confidence in his spiritual friendships, and went boldly forward, neither doubting nor fearing but that 'all things are possible to him that believeth.' The pillar of cloud moved forward, he must needs follow.

If the congregation of the Common had seen him as he entered the Board room in the company of Mr. Callenberg, they would scarcely have recognised the preacher of yesterday; but if the more intimate circle who were accustomed to meet with him at home had been there, they would have seen that he was not alone. It was Pawley, but more than Pawley; it was the form of the man, with the transformation due to an added power perceptibly invisible but undeniably present. Just as the personality of a judge is lost in the majestic overshadowing of the law, so Pawley appeared as he recognised the salutation of the Board.

'Will you take a seat?' asked the chairman, nonchalantly, 'and then we shall be glad to hear if you think you will be able to render us any assistance in solving this mystery.'

'I came at your request for that purpose.'

'I think our inquiry was whether you considered yourself able to give us any assistance by the aid of your peculiar practices.'

'It does not speak well for the commercial or religious morality of England when the practice of righteousness is designated peculiar,' he replied. But my answer to your deputation was that I would be here at one o'clock if I had the consent of God, whose alone I am and in whose cause I am now here.'

'Then you imagine you can help us? How do you propose to proceed?' inquired the chairman, anxious to get to business.

'Will someone briefly run over the facts of the case again, in order that I may make sure of them?'

'You can do that as well as anyone, Mr. Ballantyne,' said the president to the secretary. I suppose you merely wish for an outline to begin with?'

'That is all I want.'

Whereupon the man who had spent his whole business life in the service of the Corporation, and had done much to establish its universal position, briefly recounted the facts we have already heard.

When he had finished Pawley asked, -

‘Will you now recall to your mind all the persons who are connected with your company who by any possible association, influence or advantage might secure an opportunity of entering into any arrangement to carry out any such diversion of money, and tell me if you cannot find some indication which may lead us to a clue?’

‘Let me say, for the sake of saving time,’ interposed the chairman, that we have already made a most laborious investigation in this direction again and again without the least result.’

‘I have nothing to do with your failures, sir; if you really wish to know where this money has gone and who has appropriated it, allow me to proceed; but if you do not wish to make the discovery it is useless to waste my time.’

The tone of authority he adopted and the inference to be drawn from his significant words secured him against further interference, and turning again to the secretary he repeated his question in substance.

‘Both Mr. Silchester and myself,’ he answered, indicating the assistant secretary who sat beside him at a side table, have traversed the ground a thousand times. We have done it separately, together, and with the assistance of the most skilled detectives the world can produce.’

‘And you have found no cause of suspicion?’

‘Nowhere.’

‘Have you a good memory?’

The question was asked quietly, but there was a world of meaning in the look by which it was accompanied. Ballantyne himself did not appear to notice the glance, but he was the only man it did not move.

‘What do you mean?’ he inquired, as if the doubt possibly implied was intended to cast some sinister reflection upon his business capacity.

‘Just what I ask,’ replied Pawley.

‘I think my position sufficiently answers for that.’

‘Has Mr. Silchester also a good memory?’

The shaft, whatever it was, found its mark in the assistant; but all Ballantyne’s Scotch blood was boiling with indignation.

‘What base insinuation is this you mean?’ he cried, taking a hurried step towards the intrepid Pawley.

Instantly the whole Board was on its feet, and never within the chamber had such

a scene of excitement been witnessed. The whole air was charged with insult, recrimination, revelation and doubt, and the only man who was not disturbed thereby was he who had pushed the apparently trivial question. He sat in his luxurious armchair with his head resting upon his hand and quietly waited until the chairman had induced the secretary to return to his seat.

‘Gentlemen, time is too precious for me to waste it, but I call you to witness that I am about to give every facility to the two gentlemen I have appealed to, to recall any possible knowledge they may not yet have utilised in this inquiry. And please do not misunderstand me nor attach any further importance to my words at present than you are warranted in doing. There is a connection with which I am acquainted - I will say so much to assist your two confidential officers - that will give us a clue to this whole mystery, and I wish again to ask if they can recollect anything likely to assist us?’

‘Who knows the secrets of this Corporation best?’ demanded the secretary, his temper again rising into a threatening attitude. ‘Who are you to come here flinging your insinuations around?’

‘I must ask you, Mr. Ballantyne, not to prolong this unpleasantness by any heated remarks. Let us keep calm and see where this man is about to lead us.’

‘Calm, sir; could you be calm under the same circumstances? In the course of this inquiry we have all at one time or the other had to endure a certain amount of suspicion which have been made by gentlemen, and we have come out of the ordeal creditably. We have met our equals with frankness, have given them every facility for their labours because they pursued them honourably; but what reparation have I against a contemptible mountebank whose name is a byword and his profession illegal? I appeal to you, gentlemen, by the regard you have for your own reputations, if you have no respect for myself, to put an end at once to this charlatan’s travesty.’

‘There is a certain force in Mr. Ballantyne’s contention,’ replied the chairman, and I am somewhat of opinion that a mistake has been made. You have been most unfortunate,’ he said addressing Pawley, ‘in adopting a method of innuendo which might be allowed in other places, but is certainly out of place here. Still, as you have indicated that something is known to you, for the welfare of the institution, against my better personal judgment, I am willing to hear any statement you may have to make, but I cannot allow any further altercation between yourself and any gentleman present.’

‘I am not here, gentlemen, at my own request, or on my own behalf. You sought me, and I granted your application to come and do for you what your social and commercial equals had failed to do. I may be charlatan mountebank or knave, let that be as the issue determines, but I will at once come to the point. My appeal to the memory of your officials was a merciful suggestion which, had they been wise, they would have profited by, and even now I am willing to give another opportunity to

‘speak before I proceed, if they choose to accept it.’

He paused and waited. There was no doubt now what he intended to do; the only question was how he proposed to prove his point. Neither Ballantyne nor Silchester took the proffered advantage.

‘I call you to witness, gentlemen, that I have been as lenient in this matter as may reasonably be expected - I have offered mercy as I would plead for it for myself; but it is disregarded. Now to clear up your mystery.’

‘I believe Mr. Silchester resides upon the premises.’

‘Yes!’ responded the chairman.

‘In his bedroom there is a secret safe. I will ask two members of this Board to proceed to that room with Mr. Silchester and bring from that safe - lodged in a secret drawer - a small crimson leather account-book, locked with two secret combination locks. The key to one lock is known only to your secretary, and the other to his assistant, but when we have that book you will be in possession of all you need.’

If the universe had collapsed as Pawley deliberately unfolded this information the consternation could not have been greater than he produced. The men, who had defied him to the last, were speechless now, and the crushing denouncement needed no confirmation further than was visible in the appalling terror they betrayed. There was no congratulation of Pawley, but the members of the Board shrank from him as if afraid. But on his face rested the shadow of a great sorrow, as if he felt a kindly commiseration for the fallen men.

It was an intensely painful moment. No one cared to speak, yet it was impossible not to proceed.

‘Gentlemen,’ said the chairman, presently, speaking under the influence of a very perceptible emotion, in the presence of a disaster like this one can scarcely tell what to say. ‘But, honestly speaking, I would rather this mystery had remained unsolved than discover it to be that which I fear to be the truth. I hope the solution we hear is a false one; we have not yet put it to the test, and for the sake of honour and financial integrity I trust it will be falsified. But we must pursue this serious accusation, and yet with the hope of relieving the uncertainty at once I will ask one or both the gentlemen named if such a book as the one mentioned is in existence?’

Ballantyne had aged years since he had spoken five minutes before, but, crushed beneath the weight of the exposure he had suffered, he staggered to his feet by the aid of the table, upon which he threw his whole weight.

‘Gentlemen,’ he said in thick, guttural tones, ‘it is but too true - it is useless to deny it. For God’s sake have mercy.’

‘Amen,’ responded Pawley; and now that I have performed the office you have asked from me, gentlemen, I have neither right nor wish to enter into your further deliberations. Still, if I may be permitted another word it would be to ask you to be

merciful as you yourselves would seek for mercy. You may readily do this because you will find that the money which has been misappropriated has neither been frittered away nor squandered; but rather invested in such a way that your losses will be insignificant even if you realise at once, but by consenting to take over the property available you may be repaid in full. In such circumstances you may find that the natural but inevitable results of this disclosure will work its own punishment, and if my wish has any weight in framing your determination I pray that you may grant it so.'

'I think you have a right to see this painful business to the end,' urged the chairman, and whatever our feelings may be at this overwhelming disaster, not only our thanks but also our apologies are due to yourself -'

'I sincerely trust you will not think of these things now,' interposed Pawley; 'I have simply performed my duty honestly, according to the ability God has given me, and all the thanks are His. For the rest, what the contents of the book I have referred to will reveal I am already acquainted with, and it is better you should continue your deliberations in my absence.'

'Will you allow me to request that for the present this interview shall be regarded as confidential?'

'So far as I am concerned it will always be so regarded. It is God's business and I have no more to do with it.'

'Then I must say that we are deeply grateful for your services, and I trust we shall meet again under more favourable circumstances a few days hence.'

Pawley then left.

What he foretold afterwards proved to be correct in every particular. The secret book revealed a carefully-concealed and ingenious plan of manipulation in the diversion of funds by which it was morally impossible to discover the offenders, and well warranted the position Ballantyne assumed before the inquiry made him cognisant of the fact that he was not dealing in this instance with unaided human intelligence but rather with - as he mentally interpreted it - 'the de'il himself.' Still the money was discovered to have been well invested, with equally skilful care in obliterating identity, with all the financial acumen and ability of their position, and when the accounts were balanced and full valuations made the Corporation was only at a trifling temporary loss, with a bright prospect of a full restoration at no distant date.

Under these circumstances it was determined by the directors, with the approval of their legal advisers, that, considering the valuable services of their late secretary and his assistant, the grounds of justice would be fully met in accepting the plea of Pawley, and the two men were dismissed to face the world with a certain consciousness that their impecuniosity was a merciful harvest of their own sin.

As for Pawley, he was recalled in order that the Board might make over to him the generous reward and provision that had been offered for a solution of the mystery; but in the meantime he had discussed the matter with St Clear. Ernest was determined not to accept a penny for his share in the transaction, but his friend advised him otherwise. Through this means, he counselled, God had made provision to grant the request to give some permanent form to his work on the Common, and also make an acknowledgment of the faith in which he had hitherto laboured. Upon this understanding he consented to receive one third of the amount which had been originally named as the reward, which, with a few personal donations, made in appreciation by individual directors, enabled him to restore his home to what he had so long desired for his wife and children's sake, and afterwards provide for the continuance of his work. After that he accepted so much of the pension as would relieve him of further anxiety and allow him to work with an easy mind.

The announcement of such an arrangement was received on the Common with loud acclaim on the following Sunday; but to all inquiries as to where and how it came about Pawley only answered, 'God sent it'.

Chapter XLI – The Brotherhood

One of the most pronounced characteristics of human nature is that of contrariety. We fret and worry and labour to secure the thing we have not - all we possess is not worthy to be compared with that we want; but if perchance we do eventually secure it, as we grasp the prize its value disappears and we find it was only distance that lent the enchantment; then instantly we cast our eyes around for something new. We philosophically try to persuade ourselves that the desire depreciated and ultimately lost its value by the inordinate delays by which we were hampered, but it was nothing of the kind. This common experience to all humanity is the demonstration of a natural law to which all are subject, an experience mercifully designed to work for the betterment of good and bad alike, a provisional care for the guidance, testing and uplifting every soul, if we will only read the lesson aright, and by faithful continuance abstract the blessing which primarily attracted us.

There must necessarily be some good in whatever gives an inspiration to noble effort. That we lose the sight of it by proximity is no argument to the contrary, because in so placing ourselves we lose the true perspective and our appreciation needs to be brought into harmony with our new relationship. All our disappointment arises from the fact that our expected treasure is not found upon the surface of the gift, and we fail to understand that at the distance we could only see the bulk, not the detail; the effect produced, not the necessary construction; the entirety, not the parts. We saw the latent possibilities shining through the protecting wrappers, and did not imagine that when we reached our desire its secret would need to be

unfolded before it was revealed. Still the hope is not yet lost, it is only enshrined, go on – ‘Seek and ye shall find,’ not only that the promise remains but also that the attracting glory was but an index - a trifling suggestion of the treasure which shall be revealed.

Earth is a repository of untold and unimaginable riches sufficient to satiate the desires of every noble soul, and yet we wander like aimless vagrants, poverty-stricken and disconsolate, because we lack the necessary energy and application requisite to success. ‘Every one that seeketh findeth,’ but it is more congenial to grumble than to work. ‘God giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not,’ but a condition is attached to the gift, and we would rather go without the heritage than be dictated to. ‘Every one that asketh receiveth,’ but we are not paupers to crave for charity.

Such are some few of the fruitfully-suggestive contrarities of human nature, which like earth-worms devour the roots of spirituality and keep us in sickly feebleness when God’s own strength might be perfected in our weakness if we would but rise to the occasion.

Of course the effect produced by these contrarities upon different individuals will vary in accordance with habit and temperament; some men are conquered and crushed by them, but others ‘by opposing end them’ and enter into the reward of their labours. But the experience engendered by the trial is as wide and various as the human family.

So it happened to Ernest Pawley. Afar off he had seen what a glorious opportunity would be his could he but find some way of making his work permanent, and he had prayed and thought and laboured to reach the goal for which his soul sighed. Now God had answered him, and lo! when the door of opportunity flew open so unexpectedly, the vision he saw was one of superhuman labour, mountainous difficulty and almost impossible effort. Thousands of other men had made the attempt of which he had so fondly dreamed, had broken down under it, died and been forgotten. He had sketched a programme too wide, had embraced too much, and now when God had answered his cry, when the pillar of cloud called him forward to put his ideal of Christianity into practice, and the money to commence the work was already in his hand, the stupendous task appalled him and he cried with Paul, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’

How strange that the idea of such developments had never crossed his mind before he allowed himself to drift so far upon the tide of events! And yet again, if God had designed or saw it necessary for him to consider these things, would He not have withdrawn the veil? If we could always foresee the outcome of our acts - were allowed, in any sense, to be the architects of our own career - would it contribute to our greater good or ill?

‘Why are we discontent?’

God leads, and sees right onward to the end;
But we are blind. Try as we may to see
Our lifted foot but falls in mystery.
We know not yet the Now; how can we safely tend,
Forecast, provide for in the unborn Then
We may not reach? Oh, foolish sons of men,
Be still; God knows! Trust thou in Him and rest,
Nor more disturb thy soul - He orders for the best!

‘I feel something as I imagine Jonah felt when God commanded him to go to Nineveh and he took ship for Tarshish,’ said Pawley to his wife at this time. ‘All that I have asked and more - more than I ever thought or desired - God has given me; the cup of my dreams has been filled to overflowing; my work on the Common has been crowned with more than victory, and yet I feel very much like running away, rather than taking up the cross of responsibility the Master has laid at my feet.’

‘That is easily understandable, my lad; Christ knows and can appreciate such a natural shrinking of the flesh. The duties to which we are accustomed we perform with almost mechanical confidence, even smiling when others wonder how we accomplish them. How many wonder at your work every Sunday and the ease with which you control the multitude of opinions arrayed against you. They could not do it, but you have grown into it, and in so doing fail to recognise the extent of the task you perform. It is the new, the unknown, the untried at which we naturally shrink and feel diffident; but the work is not yours any more than the past has been, it is God’s, and He is able. With His strength perfected in your weakness, even this greater development will be carried on until He sees it necessary to bring other labourers into the field. I am, for myself, perfectly assured of this, for

“His love in times past forbids me to think
He’ll leave us at last in trouble to sink.”

And so long as we have His presence why need we be afraid? Have you mentioned this to St Clear?’

‘No! Neither should I care to do so. I am ashamed of such ingratitude after all he has done for me.’

‘Surely that should be sufficient to convince you that these feelings only arise from the weakness of the flesh and not the unwillingness of the spirit. It’s the grip of the dead hand of old mortality upon you, Ernest, trying to hold you back from the new and larger life God is opening out before us. Shake yourself, my lad, and get free

from the unworthy restraint. I am not doubtful, except,' she added with very demure humility, 'as to whether I shall be able to carry out one half of the work I should like to do with the women.'

'Do you think I shall consent to have a woman's department?' he asked with airy sauciness.

'You may not, but I shall,' she replied archly, 'and if I experience any trouble about it, I shall at once refer the matter to St. Clear, and I am sure he will uphold me. Just fancy any forward movement without any thought about the women.'

'But I think my little woman has quite enough on her hands at present. You have already done the life-work of three or four women, dear, and I want to see you rest now.'

'But I don't want to rest, and shall strenuously refuse to be pushed out of this new work like a naughty child who is not wanted. The work I have done was only a preparation for this I have now to do. It is always the busy people who can do a little extra; and just imagine how useful all my past experience will be in dealing with the women in straitened circumstances; but if you make no women's section of your work it will all be lost.'

'Well, my girl, we will see how it works out presently; but at present I have no conception how St. Clear will advise. If he approve and you can teach women to be to their husbands the help you have been to me, your part of the work will be the greater of the two, for without your assistance I should have gone under long ago, and this work would never have been begun.'

With such cautious, half-reluctant steps did he move forward in those first few days, until he lost his depth in the flood of new duties; then he neither faltered nor hesitated, but shouldering his cross went forward, following the sign which led him.

His apprehension of difficulties, however, proved to have foundation in something more solid than the shrinking of the flesh. The position he had taken was thoroughly unique, being purely eclectic, without committing himself to the programme of any existing institution or body. He found some good in every movement - something desirable and helpful in uplifting humanity; a thread of pure Christianity, as he interpreted it, was to be found in almost every social, political and religious fabric, and these he was anxious to collect and use in a practical form in the institution he would found. This liberality of mind attracted men of widely-different modes of thought to hear him, and the skill with which he harmonised and arranged the ideas in his discourses and discussions commended his basis theoretically as an advisable centre from which to work, since Pawley was perfectly satisfied to allow a wide divergence of opinion from himself in matters of detail, because identity of thought all along the line is a hopeless impossibility. In this lay one secret of his power all through his open-air work, and the graceful dexterity with which he reconciled opposing factions no doubt produced in the minds of many exaggerated

ideas as to what might be accomplished if his work could only be consolidated. At least results proved to be so.

Even though he had not to ask anyone to assist him in the way of capital, it was absolutely essential that he should seek for help in forming some idea of the lines on which the work should be continued as well as putting the same into execution; and upon such committee it was equally necessary that each feature of his programme should also be represented. This meant a large committee, and no sooner did he succeed in bringing it together than every member of it was anxious to include the whole of his own programme to the exclusion of his opponent, and failure to accomplish the desire produced friction, irritation and oftentimes a temporary injury to the work. Under St. Clear's guiding counsel, however, Pawley kept the final authority in his own hands, in the certainty that firm government would presently produce order out of the temporary discord; irreconcilables would be weeded out and their places taken by others who were willing to accept the broad, eclectic principles which Pawley determined to maintain.

Suitable premises were soon secured, which had been erected for manufacturing purposes. These included a number of rooms already available for occupation, and a small hall capable of seating from three to four hundred people, with a large shed, which at moderate expense could be converted into a hall such as was needed for larger meetings and concerts.

Furnishing went on briskly, and before the meetings on the Common came to an end 'The Brotherhood' was inaugurated, and from the first proved to be a pronounced success.

Now Pawley began to feel his real lack of help, for the new institution was open seven days a week, and all day, and at night his rooms were occupied with groups of men who needed directing minds to lead them. For such assistance it was impossible for him at present to pay, when though he could find the exact men he wanted, because the expenses he had already incurred were in considerable advance of his estimates, and the receipts were in no way commensurate with the expenditure. In this difficulty he looked around to try and find the help he so sadly needed.

He met Aucott.

'I hear your Brotherhood is a great success,' said the latter, in greeting him.

'Far beyond even our most sanguine expectations I am sadly in need of help. Will you come and give me a hand?'

'I shall be pleased to do so - that is if our opinions don't clash too much.'

'Our basis is quite wide enough to avoid that, and we are too busy with useful work to waste time over straw-splitting.'

'What are your conditions of membership?'

'A subscription of one penny per week and "whosoever will may come."'

‘But have you no common basis of faith?’

‘The general principle of the Brotherhood is an attempt to apply the golden rule towards man, and a belief in the Fatherhood of God, upon the basis of my lectures upon the Common. It is in no sense a church, but just what its name implies. You have no idea what a field of usefulness it has opened up, but I stand sadly in need of help in the evenings, for as yet the labourers are few indeed.’

‘You are sure to have a crowd if you throw your doors so wide open,’ he answered reflectively, ‘but I have little faith in unrestricted membership. In my experience it leads to harm rather than good.’

‘Christ provided for a much wider membership than I am able to do.’

‘Yes; but then you are not Christ, you know.’

‘Unfortunately we are not able to say we are true followers of Him,’ responded Pawley, since we are unwilling to leave those who consider themselves safe in the fold and go after those who are lost; we have more preference to consort with the healthy than minister to the sick, would rather fraternise with the scribes and pharisees in Jerusalem than be found in company with the prophet from Nazareth. Still, out of Nazareth came the world’s salvation -’

‘No! from Bethlehem.’

Well, from Bethlehem, Ratcliffe Highway or the Borough, if the point is essential to your peace of mind. But will you come and help us in our need?’

‘I am afraid I dare not unless you will consent to raise the Brotherhood into an avowed Christian institution.’

‘All right, my friend, we must still agree to differ, but I must refuse to put your gag, or any other of such fanatical kind, upon my work, even if I have to get along without your assistance.’

‘Please don’t misunderstand me. I have the highest appreciation of you and the work you are doing, but there is only one way of salvation.’

‘And you are throwing a stumbling-block in that one way because those who walk therein cannot pronounce your shibboleth; and you are so blinded by doctrinal bigotry and traditions of men that you cannot see how you hinder the very work you profess to have at heart.’

But it was no use, Aucott was going to heaven through a very narrow gate, by a path which only a few can find, and he had no wish for the company of a crowd, therefore he could not join the Brotherhood.

Still the work went on and increased, and we may be pardoned here if we pause a moment to gain an idea of the scope of its operations.

Many men applied for membership apparently under the impression that the possession of a card would forthwith admit them into the full advantages of the

millennium, in which work of all description would be discontinued and earth transformed into a Paradise of luxurious enjoyment. Now this view was certainly rather too optimistic to form and encourage, but the actual benefits which Pawley had been able to secure had at once a very material effect upon the income of his people. A list of tradespeople was handed with the card, with whom arrangements had been made, upon the co-operative principle, for trading in almost every necessity of the home upon discount terms of a very liberal nature. Coals could be delivered all the year round at wholesale prices by a subscription of one shilling a week; boots, clothing and furniture clubs were also formed upon a similar basis, so that from the first the Brotherhood was equal to a substantial rise in wages. Sick benefit and loan societies were formed, from the latter of which small sums could be borrowed at an interest of about one per cent., repayable in fractional instalments, to meet emergencies which oftentimes break up the homes of working people; and every suggestion not anticipated was gladly received and considered, with a view to adapt if useful or practicable.

Turning to the club accommodation, a most commodious reading-room was furnished with a wide selection of morning, evening and weekly papers, where smoking was permissible while reading; and in a smaller room adjoining were to be found illustrated papers, periodicals and magazines where smoking was prohibited because accessible during certain hours to females. In other rooms were billiards, bagatelle, chess, draughts, dominoes and other games, for the former of which only such prices were charged as would give a slight margin above actual cost, so that skill, amusement and recreation might be secured without an expenditure of money beyond the means of the players. Coffee and light refreshments were provided upon the same principle, but all intoxicants were rigorously excluded. Any attempt at gambling was met in, the first instance by a caution, and if repeated, by temporary or permanent exclusion, but the ever-watchful president had little trouble in this direction.

In all these departments Pawley kept a general oversight, but was constantly represented by deputies from one or other of the sub-committees who managed the different sections. In spite of his great infirmity the Rev. Frederick Holmes found congenial employment on two evenings of the week in the directorship of the Chess Club; and in William Saddler a most energetic conductor was discovered for the active temperance work that was originated.

Elinor was far more successful than her husband in gathering around her an active ladies' committee willing to co-operate in any useful work determined on. A domestic agency was established, and certain rooms were given over to the work of the ladies during the day, of which most busy use was made. Servants and overworked mothers might bring or send in materials, and willing hands made up the garments in sewing meetings free of charge. Elinor had two or three dressmakers pressed into her service, nor rested until she had procured three or four sewing-

machines in order to reduce labour to a minimum and so keep pace with the requirements in this department. Outside this large quantities of new materials were made up, much of which came to hand in response to Mrs. Holmes's correspondence for the purpose; second-hand clothes were renovated, and a monthly sale established in which members or their wives might receive all the advantages, so long as a trifling amount was handed over towards the expenses of the place.

But of all the workers the lion's share fell upon Pawley's shoulders. He had taken it as his one work by this time, with St. Clear's concurrence, and spent his whole time in the management of it.

During the day, when the rooms were comparatively little used, the ordinary business routine was enough to engage him, a paid secretary, and one of his sons. One night in each week he had to give to his council meeting, and the direction of the forty different items which already formed their programme required the whole of the night to deal with. His other nights, until he could secure more help, were filled up with classes (sometimes three in an evening), lectures, or occasionally accepting a challenge to a game of chess, draughts, billiards or otherwise to keep in fraternal touch with his members.

It was heavy work, in addition to his Sunday services, but he was happy in it because continually receiving testimony of the good he was doing. He had lightened the load of life which had long pressed on many shoulders. The Brotherhood was becoming recognised as a haven of refuge, its influence was permeating homes and lives, men and women were already better for its existence; and that was the one thing for which he was working. If the work did press heavy upon him it would not be for long; the utility of the institution would soon be acknowledged, and with another winter he would be certain to receive recognition and assistance in some parts of his work; or if not his large hall would be available and he could arrange for such lectures and concerts as would give him the requisite relief.

So he worked and prayed, happy in the results that were visible on every hand.

Chapter XLII – Personal Influence

With April came the necessary change in the order of procedure. The voices of the spring had the usual fascination for the young people, who for several weeks past had been represented by active committees making arrangements for outdoor recreation and amusement. Cricket, tennis, rambling, cycling and other clubs were formed, and the burden of the classes and lectures which had so long pressed upon Pawley's shoulders was lifted for a time; not that the older and more sober-minded of his members were anxious to put their studies aside, but Pawley was a firm believer in the gospel of fresh air, and advocated an interest in the amusements of the young people as a desirable advantage not to be neglected.

The winter's work had made serious inroads upon his health and strength, and when they thought of him and the rest he needed they were willing to accede to his suggestion if only he would promise to 'take his own physic,' a stipulation he consented to abide by as far as the inevitable duties of his office would permit.

Of course there still remained a vast amount of detail and management to be discharged at the ever-open home. The reading-rooms and many of the clubs knew nothing of times and seasons, and every department of the women's work went on without intermission. Elinor kept the scissors, needles and machines snipping, hemming and stitching, in answer to present demands or in prospect of future requirements, with the result that the labours of those summer afternoons and evenings provided a substantial and free tea for more than eight hundred destitute children as an inauguration of the new year.

But energetic minds are restless almost before their weariness is over, and Pawley had not taken time to recover his breath before he proposed to recommence his open-air work on the Common, in addition to the morning and evening services in his own hall. His plea was that there were many persons living at a distance who regularly came to hear him on the Common but could not join the Brotherhood, tradesmen and assistants who were too busy and tired during the week, and many who, from the multitude of reasons London so uniquely furnishes, would be disappointed not to hear him while they enjoyed the open air, and he was anxious to continue his work among them. Not a few of his friends, however, foresaw that such a proposal would entirely prevent his necessary recuperation before the winter, when his work would, in all probability, become even more arduous than in the past, owing to the continual increase of the membership and the new addition of branches of usefulness already under consideration. They therefore approached Elinor to secure her influence with their own to dissuade him from such an ill-advised proceeding. She promised to think the matter over, really to give her an opportunity to consult St. Clear, which explanation could not be made to her interviewers because of their ignorance of his existence, and by this means she saved her husband from his folly and himself.

As the weeks and months went by the Brotherhood commanded respect, even though it failed to enlist the assistance it needed to make in enduring. By its works and fruits it appealed with trumpet tongues alike to reformers, humanitarians and professing Christians to lay aside their narrow prejudices and meet upon a free and liberal platform with no other doctrinal basis than an application of the golden rule. The initial success had already been achieved. Of course everyone could find some objection in particular features of the institution - for instance, one would object to the billiard-room, but it was a certain fact that its establishment in the Brotherhood had closed the saloon attached to the public-house opposite within six weeks, and already three or four men who frequented the house for the sake of the billiards, and had fallen deplorable victims to the drink, were now pledged abstainers in regular

work and with prosperous homes. These advantages had to be balanced against the objection, and in the result it would be a suicidal policy to shut out the billiards. The same argument might be equally applied to other phases of the work, but let one illustration suffice. Pawley was at work to reclaim and save, and fishing for men, he was glad to avail himself of every legitimate piscatorial device in baiting his hooks if by any means he could save some. We know him well enough by this time to understand that many of the attractions he adopted were not the most congenial recreations or pastimes to himself, and he was wise and liberal enough to acknowledge that the minds of all men were not cast in his mould. He knew well enough that the net in which mackerel mesh will let the herrings through, and the hook with which he could safely land a whiting would come to grief with a black-jack or a cod. This lack of consideration and adaptation is a lesson yet to be learned and applied by the successors of the Galilean fishermen, and when the children of the kingdom become as wise in their day and generation as the children of this world, when we are able to take the wisdom of the serpent and combine it with the harmlessness of the dove, when we wake up to the idea that to be successful fishers we must go where the fish are, and carry the most approved tackle for our labours, then such a work as Pawley's will be assisted and our nets will break with the harvest of life's sea as we drag them to the land. But never mind the breaking net; other drift fishers will be close alongside, and they that escape from one will be found meshed in the nets of the other, and so when the morning breaks we will all rejoice together.

As the summer wore on it became more and more certain to Pawley that no substantial help would be forthcoming before the winter session commenced, and it was absolutely necessary that he should make preparation therefore. He sighed as he thought of his own weakness in comparison with the greater expansion of his work consequent upon the addition of his larger hall, but he was conscious where all necessary assistance could be secured, so opening his shoulders to the demand which was laid upon him, he stooped, took up the cross of duty and went forward.

By this time the membership had reached an aggregate of two thousand and was continually increasing. These were representative of almost every conceivable phase of human thought - political, social, religious and agnostic, and the task of arranging a programme adequately providing for such a variety of minds required no little labour and consideration. Still it had to be done, and with a view of reducing it to some practicable shape Pawley invited half-a-dozen members of his council to meet him and arrange a preliminary proposal for submission to the larger body. The difficulty was at length surmounted; the new hall was to be open every night, like every other part of the building (save only on Sundays), and a programme was arranged, extending to the new year, meeting most of the demands, and well-known lecturers were engaged, competent to discuss the various subjects - scientific, political, historic and otherwise, which had been proposed; Saturday night being reserved for popular concerts of which Elinor took control, with the assistance of the bandmaster, pianist and organist as a committee.

Throughout all this organisation we have made but the slightest and most casual reference to the religious aspect of the work. Had it transpired that in providing for the recreation and amusement as well as the intellectual development of the members Pawley had allowed the more vital point to be forgotten? No; not in any sense, but with a tact of which he was a fairly astute master, he prosecuted his work in this direction free from any ostentatious or objectionable persistence. He was no advocate of goody-goody methods, was too painfully conscious of the harm rather than good of seeking to thrust religion *nolens volens* down a man's throat, and he wisely adopted a more excellent and successful way in which he led the blind unsuspectingly towards the desired goal. Through every branch of his work there ran an oftentimes invisible guiding thread, soft and fine as silk, but all the same it possessed effectual leading qualities, and as he manipulated it, it did lead and produced results where it was least suspected. Here is an instance.

An aged and retired minister dropped into the office and inquired for the president one day, and, being introduced into the private room where Pawley was busy with his correspondence, said,-

'My name is Ayres, Mr. Pawley. I have taken the opportunity of calling to hear something more of this wonderful work I am told you are doing.'

'Be seated, doctor; I have heard of your kind inquiries from Mrs. Lankaster, who is one of our most indefatigable workers, and well able to tell you what we are trying to do.'

'Trying to do, do you say? Why, if one half of that she says is true you are putting all our churches to the blush, I can assure you.'

'I have no wish to do that, but if I can stir them to emulate or oppose me, I shall be satisfied; anything is better than stagnation.'

'Now, take the case of Mrs. Lankaster herself. With the death of her husband all the light passed out of her life, till you discovered her, and now see what she is. It was the improvement I saw in her that led me to know of you and your work.'

'Her case is an illustration of what I say. She is a splendid woman of enviable ability, but had no interest in life. When my wife discovered her she was induced to take the management of our domestic agency, from which she learned to appreciate other departments of our work. An idle, useless life gave her scope to nurse her grief, but there is no room for idleness where my wife and I are, and you see what work has done for Mrs. Lankaster. I am still sadly in need of workers, and if you have any spare time on your hands, I shall be glad if you can see your way to place it at our disposal.'

'My dear friend,' replied the astonished doctor, 'I am already far past the three score and ten, and beyond taking any part in such an enterprise.'

'Years are nothing if the heart is young,' replied the president, good-humouredly;

some men are old at forty, but Moses was young at treble the age. If you will say you will help I will undertake to find you congenial work; the heart-breaking burden I have to bear is to see the work needing to be done, the facilities we have for doing it and the few who are willing to help.'

'I am altogether ignorant of it. Mrs. Lankaster has told me so much that I could not resist the desire to call and see you; but the strain of such a work would be too much for me. I only wish I was forty years younger.'

'I have work none but those who have your years of experience can touch - it is left undone at present, though the Master is, I know, anxious about it. Can you not give me a little help, if only one hour a week for a month?'

'I wish I could, but I dare not,' he replied, touched by the yearning sincerity of the appeal. 'At my time of life I dare not trust myself in the company of men who have imbibed your intensity of soul. But I feel for your loneliness, and I am willing to help you in the one way I think is alone practical.'

'I will thank God for any help, however small it be.'

'Mrs. Lankaster tells me that should you break down any Sunday you have no one on whom you can call.'

'Not a soul that I know of.'

'Then call upon me and I will be pleased to help you.'

'I thank you, for Christ's sake, for that relief.'

Then the two looked silently into each others' eyes for a moment without speaking. The doctor had been drawn within the circle of Pawley's fascinating influence, his heart went out to the man, and he realised the mysterious power he wielded over men, of which Mrs. Lankaster was never tired of speaking, but which hitherto he had doubted, as being the infatuation of gratitude. He knew better now and began to understand the secret of the strange heretic's success. On the other hand, Pawley's lonely soul felt the vibrations of sympathy towards himself, but he would not avail himself of its generous outflow to over-persuade his new friend.

'Now will you allow me to ask you about one special feature of your work in which I feel a most curious interest?'

'I shall be glad to give you any information in my power.'

'Our mutual friend tells me what a hold you have upon the Secularists.'

'Does she?' he answered as unconsciously as if the fact had never before occurred to his mind. 'Well, perhaps she knows better about that than I do; for I tell you candidly I make it a practice not to ask any man what he is, and unless they drop the information that they are Agnostics, Secularists, or even Atheists I should not seek to know it. They are all welcome, for the Brotherhood is for them equally as much as the most pronounced Christian.'

‘How many such men have you in membership, do you suppose?’

‘That is quite impossible to say. As I tell you, we make no inquiries as to belief; but among two thousand five hundred I should not be surprised to find seventy or eighty.’

‘But is it true that these men attend your religious services?’

‘A number of them do so regularly.’

‘And still call themselves Atheists?’

‘I should not wonder if they do,’ Pawley answered, smiling. ‘I know it is so in one or two instances, but I attribute that more to habit than design; they fail to recognise the change that has so gradually come over their ideas.’

‘But the thing appears to me perfectly incredible. Mark me,’ he hurried to explain, ‘I can readily understand a man with atheistical ideas being attracted once or twice from motives of curiosity, but do you really mean to say that some of them are regular attenders?’

‘Yes, not a few of them are; and I fail to see why it should not be so. These men, though spiritually blind as they may be - whether from birth, accident, or negligence of others makes no difference - are, I believe, as anxious to learn the truth as you or I; and when such truth is faithfully and clearly set before them, they are as keenly able to appreciate it as others - their eyes are open through the miracle-working power of Christ’s gospel, and they are instinctively drawn to Him. Surely such a result ought not to be so incredible to us.’

‘I will grant you that it ought not to be so, but I must sorrowfully confess that it is so none the less.’

‘Well, let me try and assist your unbelief,’ responded Pawley, with his usual desire to drive every item of his truth fully home. ‘Will you come down to our service on Sunday night - take the prayer for me - and afterwards I will introduce you to one or more of these men; then you can hear what they have to say about it.’

The invitation was frankly accepted, and on the following Sunday evening Ernest Pawley was, for the first time, accompanied to the platform of the Brotherhood by a regularly recognised minister of the Congregational body.

The service commenced by singing that grand universal anthem of the Church: -

‘All hail the power of Jesus’ name,’

during the singing of which Ernest called the doctor’s attention to a very prominent individual in front of the platform.

‘That is Thomas Burridge. Surely you know his name and boasted Secularism?’

‘Do you mean the man singing so lustily?’

‘Yes.’

After the service this man was introduced to the doctor.

‘Mr. Pawley tells me that you are a free-thinker?’ the inquirer ventured after one or two preliminary questions.

‘So I am,’ bluntly responded Burridge. ‘I think just as I like and leave other people to do the same.’

‘Then what do you think of Mr. Pawley’s ideas of heaven as he expounded them just now?’

‘Nothing at all, because I don’t understand them. This life’s more than I can manage, and I hope I’ve got too much common sense to make matters worse by bothering about another as well.’

‘But what do you think of Jesus Christ?’

‘Nothing at all. You parsons knocked all that nonsense out of my head long ago.’

‘But I thought you were singing “Crown Him Lord of all,” just now?’

Burridge gave the doctor a sharp, quick look of confident astonishment, then his face lightened with a smile that removed its rugged hardness, and revealed a touch of sympathy which had hitherto been invisible and unsuspected.

‘It wasn’t your Jesus I meant,’ he replied. ‘If He exists at all it’s on the other side of the stars, listening to angels singing. He’s too busy to bother Himself about us poor devils who have to puff and sweat trying to make both ends meet on a Saturday night. It’s Mr. Pawley’s Jesus I was singing about - a man among men, who has no idea or time to think about angels so long as men are suffering and need His help. Pawley’s Jesus has took a contract to put the world right, and, by thunder, he’s going to do it too! and He’s letting the angels look after themselves till He’s finished it. “Finish your work first, then you can take your pleasure with a clear conscience,” He says, and He don’t only tell us to do it, but He lends a hand on the job Himself, and you may be sure about this - if ever He climbs the golden ladder, it won’t be till the last poor devil who needs His help has gone up before Him. Bless you, when I’m bothered at my work I can talk to Him as He stands beside my bench, and I know He hears me, and I’m a better man for knowing He’s about. If you were in my place and knew our Jesus, as Mr. Pawley makes us know Him, and knew He was always at your elbow as I know He is at mine, I guess you would sing quite as loud as I do. But don’t you forget it, He’s as different to your Jesus as bread is to chips.’

His language was more forcible than polished, but he taught the doctor a lesson and satisfied his scruples.

‘Mr. Pawley, I scarcely know how to thank you for the excellent service you have rendered me to-night,’ he said, in taking his leave, ‘and I shall esteem myself honoured if you will add my name to your membership roll.’

‘And you will give me what help you can?’

‘Most certainly I will, but for the present, at least, I cannot undertake systematic service.’

This incident will illustrate the pungent influence which Pawley’s personality exerted throughout the Brotherhood. There was no parade of religion, no advertisement of faith posted on a lugubrious countenance, no sanctimonious posing or nervous desire to hush the sinful sound of laughter. He was a man among men, sharing their pleasures, subject to their desires, appreciating their pleasantries, helping to bear their sorrows. But there was something in him which made him more than the rest in spite of the service he was always willing to render; he possessed a something which had a remarkable property of revealing itself and making every man he came in contact with dissatisfied because of the consciousness it created that he was not as Pawley was. It made him desired; even those who did not agree with him wished to be in his company; those in trouble lost half their burden in the sympathy he offered them; he seemed able to find a way instinctively through every difficulty; his smile of confidence and word of encouragement helped to lift many a lowering cloud, and the honest grip of his hand gave strength to many a timid endeavour. In fact, the strangely magnetic vibrations of his personality thrilled through every nerve and fibre of the instil talon, doing its silent, uplifting, redeeming work, as it preached by quiet action and irresistible example a gospel more powerful than lips, however eloquent, can find language to declare.

He was not oblivious of the ascendancy he had gained over the minds of his people - not only those who in their veneration regarded him with deepest affection, but also the active minority who were in, though not of, the Brotherhood - as Judas was among the disciples - watching a favourable opportunity to make something out of their position. The knowledge, however, was no occasion of pride; it rather prompted gratitude, and kept alive a keen sense of the responsibility it entailed. Many advised him to get rid of the malcontents, but he was deeply sensible of the fact that the erring stood in greater need of help. Was not his complaint with the Church the neglect of the lost in favour of the safely housed? And he was not quite so inconsistent as to fall into the error he decried. He knew these latent traitors, and by his regard for their welfare, by the added attention he bestowed upon them individually and collectively, by his questionings and reasonings, though never by direct accusation, he made them to understand his knowledge of them and their desires. He was true to them and their best interests, even to the giving to them the sop rather than to the beloved who shared his closer confidence, if by any means he could save and restore them. He loved; and with faces flushed with shame one and another of them had frequently to turn aside to hide the base selfishness with which they sought to betray him, but he trusted in God and did not forsake them.

This supremacy, however, was not altogether an unmixed pleasure under the circumstances in which he was placed, as Pawley had yet to discover to his own cost and the interest of the institution. The inevitable result of this only partial

manifestation of the Christ spirit was - as in Galilee - all men sought for him though they did not necessarily believe in him; and herein lies one eternal truth and attestation to the purity or otherwise of the gospel preached - 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' It is an everlasting effect of an immutable law which men have no power to resist. The question of service and worship evolving out of the attraction is only a matter of time. Where the Christ is, men must come, because He possesses the one thing needful to satisfy the universal desire of humanity.

Pawley's experience realised a verification of this natural fact in a most striking and undesirable direction.

When the large hall had been opened and the winter session of public lectures and discussions began, in spite of the fact that the best possible talent had been secured, and every precaution taken to make the session a success worthy of the institution, the effort proved to be a most significant failure, from no other assigned cause than Pawley's absence. The lecturers were all that could be desired, the arrangements were in every sense admirable, but unless Pawley was present very few others cared to be.

'But you know how short I am of help in this part of the work,' he urged in reply to a deputation who waited upon him to ask his reconsideration of the arrangements. I have already consented to give a part of four nights in each week to the meetings in the hall, and the two nights I am absent give me a chance of holding four classes for those who need my help more than you do downstairs.'

'Perhaps that is so,' replied one of the deputation, 'but what are we to do? It's bad enough for us to have to listen to strangers even if you are there, but to do it when you are away is like going home from work and finding mother out. Of course it's home - but it's with a mighty difference.'

Pawley smiled at the simile.

'But you must remember the size of my family. It's impossible for me to have you all in one room. Then again I am not out but only pursuing my duties elsewhere if I am not with you.'

'That's all right so far as it goes; but when we are at home you might come into the largest room so that most of us might have a look at you.'

'But don't you know that there are some household duties that cannot be publicly discharged?' He still fenced pleasantly. 'There are matters of personal advice and inquiry, cautions and admonitions, difficulties and assistance, and a hundred other matters I have to attend to equally as important as my more public work.'

'And you also have hours and hours to give to those sort of things when we are at work. We only get two or three hours at night, sometimes only twice a week, and don't you think we want to see you then, even if we have to listen most of the time to

strangers?’

‘But when you speak about strangers, you must remember that they are all gentlemen who are admitted authorities on the subjects upon which they are lecturing, and it is necessary, even though I were competent to deal with them - which I am not - that you should be brought under the influence of different minds in order that your thought may be saved from narrow limitations.’

‘We are willing to risk all that.’

‘Perhaps so. But that does not relieve me of my share of responsibility. I am not insensible to this testimony of the appreciation with which you regard me, but I am confident that what has been done is for your good; you will grow accustomed to it presently and then will not think of me at all. But if I accede to your wish it not only means the discontinuance of the four classes I am now holding, but presently you will be asking me to give the lectures myself, and believe me when I say I am neither competent nor strong enough to do so.’

‘Perhaps you wouldn’t do it in a swallow-tail coat and a white tie, but we should understand you better and get more good from what you said; you might also have to give up the classes, but you don’t have more than twenty in any one of them, while the hall would be packed to hear you like it is on Sunday nights.’

‘I can understand all that, my friend, and I believe you are, to an extent, right in what you say; but you must remember that at first I had just the same difficulty to begin my work among you on the Common, and there was the same objection to hear me as you make to these gentlemen. How do you know but that in every one of them you may presently find another man even better for your welfare than I am?’

‘We will take the chances of that.’

‘You may be willing to do so, and yet I am only advising you for your own good. I don’t want you to think I am selfish about it, but - ’

‘You needn’t tell us that; we know you well enough by this time.’

‘You scarcely know what I was about to say,’ he answered, smiling at his friends’ impetuosity. ‘I have no wish to be selfish, but I do ask you to remember the immense amount of work I have on my hands already. I am sure if you had any true conception of it you would understand how physically impossible it is for me to attempt to deliver two additional lectures a week, though I were ten times more qualified than I am.’

‘For my part,’ replied one of the members, ‘I fail to see how that would be more work than you do at present. You would give up four classes and in their place deliver two lectures; I should think you would gain in that way, and while you are talking you may just as well speak to a thousand as twenty. But whatever you do, the gist of the matter lies here, we want you instead of strangers, and if we can’t have you, well, then, the best thing to do is to shut up the hall on those two nights and save the money.’

No amount of argument could shake this determination, and the views of the deputation very clearly represented the majority of the members. Pawley was therefore compelled to face the fact that if the lectures were to form such a feature in his programme as he desired, he would be reluctantly compelled to make himself individually responsible for them, at least for a time, sacrificing whatever of educational advantage and real merit divided the lecturers from himself, and be content to struggle forward until by gradual and apparently fortuitous circumstances he would be able to transfer the duty.

Chapter XLIII - 'Thy Will Be Done'

Elinor awoke, and finding Ernest was still at work, turned up the gas to see the time. It was ten minutes to four o'clock. She made it a rule not to disturb him in his study, but this was carrying forbearance beyond all powers or reason. So, donning her dressing-gown and slippers, she proceeded to put an end to yesterday's work, and compel him to take what rest remained possible in preparation for the labours of to-day.

She found him busily engaged upon a box of lantern slides illustrative of ant life, and a small library of reference books were strewn around, in the study of which he was so engrossed as scarcely to notice her entrance for the moment.

'Ernest, my lad, whatever are you doing?' she inquired with anxious concern.

'Trying to grasp the beauties of the fact, poetry and romance of ant life,' he replied enthusiastically. 'I had no idea of the fascination of the subject until I began to examine the slides Tyler has sent me, then I discovered another world I have yet to conquer. What a pity it was that there was no Walter Tyler, with his library of lantern slides, when Alexander wept. He could have supplied the conqueror with fifty new worlds to go on with.'

Then he pushed his work aside, according to his habit whenever his wife came into his room, and swung himself round in his revolving chair to give her welcome and take his usual kiss. She started at the sight of his face. He had made a mistake - he thought of it when it was too late, but the secret was out - it could not be recalled. When he had left his work of late he had sedulously bathed his face, to remove as far as possible the traces of the overtime which pressed most heavily upon him in those midnight hours, but in her surprise visit she saw him as he really was, all unprepared to meet her, with the havoc of his labour in active operation, his eyes, burning with the fierce dry fire of a determined will, framed in purple circles adding depth to their hollowness; an ashen pallor upon his cheeks, and lips tremulously resolute. He recognised the error he had made in a moment, and smiled in an attempt to reassure her, but the love-mask only accentuated her terror, since therein she lost the last trace of her husband, and only saw the cruel grin of a death's head before her eyes.

In her horror she was terribly glad for the unusual step she had taken in seeking to disturb him, by which she had been placed in possession of the truth of his condition, perhaps before - and yet her loyal heart feared - it was too late to save him. And in that moment of discovery she began to upbraid herself that, in her engrossing labours for the Brotherhood, she had neglected her care of him until she found that he was certainly slipping beyond her reach. He to whom the whole world was only a feather-weight in comparison with the Alps; the one heart, which for more than twenty years had beat for her with the rhythmic music of purest love, was fluttering into silent rest; while yet the noon-day sun had scarcely reached its zenith,

the twilight was lowering and the cool breezes already played across and blanched his cheeks; and in a little time she would be called upon to drop for ever the hand she had held so long.

‘My darling! My lad!’ she cried in the agony of her grief, throwing herself, sobbing, around his neck, you are killing yourself, and I have been so careless of your welfare as not to see it. Put your books away and come to bed at once.’

He took her hands tenderly and tried to unclasp them that he might look into her face.

‘No! No!’ she cried, ‘I will not loose you! You are mine - and I will save you.’

He did not speak, but, with his hands resting upon her trembling arms, hesitated and peered away into vacancy at the revelation her words conjured in his mind. In the fierceness of the fight, in his unselfish devotion to duty, in the enthusiasm with which he had thrown himself into the day-toil of the vineyard, in his eagerness to secure an abundant harvest for the Master he so faithfully served, he had neither time nor thought to estimate how much he was giving to his stewardship. But Elinor’s words had revealed to him how completely all that he had was laid upon the altar of consecration! Was he sorry? Should he reach out his hand and withdraw any part of his sacrifice before all was consumed? No! He dare not do that. Yet over the arid, fiery desert of his eye a pilgrim tear wandered at the thought of her; then tenderly throwing his arms around her he drew her storm-swept face to his and kissed her lips.

‘Yes, darling, I am yours, and you are mine, but we can only be temporarily so unless we are one in Him. At its best and longest, life here is only brief, but in Him it lengthens out into the everlasting; therefore, at whatever present sacrifice it must be accomplished, we must secure the eternal. But why need we be afraid? Oh! how He loves! And what a confirmation of it He gave to us when He gave Himself! But, my precious one, we must not forget that He erected that standard as a measure of our devotion to Himself!

“Love so amazing, so divine.

Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

‘If we are not prepared to forsake all and follow Him, we are not worthy to be His disciples. In the pilgrimage of life you and I have just arrived at the point where this final demand is made upon us. It is the one bit of the way that is supremely hard and difficult; it presents the one temptation in which the tempter shall either conquer or leave us for ever. ‘Which shall it be, my darling? Is all we have given, all we have suffered, to be of no avail because we are not willing to throw the last sweet fragment of incense upon the altar? Have we followed Him so far, enjoyed such communion, received so many blessings, made so many promises, only at the last to be found like Judas, traitors, and turn our backs upon Him, simply that this weary life for one of us may be lengthened for a few months or years at the most? He knoweth our frame,

my girl; He remembereth we are but dust; whatever He does is best, and if He wills it so, the parting can only be till the day break -

*“Though painful at present ‘twill cease before long;
And then, oh, how pleasant, the conqueror’s song!”*

Let us neither go back, nor be afraid; if this is our Gethsemane we shall find the Master waiting for us beneath the cypress trees, and He will teach us how to pray – “Thy will be done!”

‘No, no, no, no,’ she wailed. ‘My lad, my life, I cannot - will not say that. Such a love as God cherishes for us can never demand this sacrifice from me.’

‘Do you remember when Bertie was born,’ he asked with a preternatural calmness born of the intensity of his trial, ‘when our home was taken away and you were left so completely alone? We then vowed together that we would trust Him even though He slew us, and events proved that we were wise in doing so. The way God took to lead us out of the difficulty was one no man could have devised, but it was the only one that met the case in all its completeness, and the far-reaching effects of that deliverance are only still unfolding. If it should be, darling’ - but here in spite of his calmness he had a difficulty in speaking - ‘that, for the moment, an even darker night is falling upon us, can we do better than trust ourselves to the same guiding and protecting love?’

He would have said more, but the secret tempest of his own grief shook and tore him until his thoughts were broken, and his lips refused to speak.

‘I am willing to do so in anything but the loss of you; but I cannot do that, because I do not believe He demands such a sacrifice.’

‘Hush, darling! His thoughts may not be as our thoughts, and who shall say but that it is the very tenacity with which we cling to each other that necessitates our separation until we find in Him our all in all. We have often sung together - and this may be the answer to our prayer-song-

*“The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy Throne,
And worship only Thee.”*

She flung herself upon her knees before him, her hands still retaining her clasp around his neck, and her tear-washed face looking almost seraphic in the glow of the self-renunciation that was gradually rising over her.

‘Would you rather go, my lad? I know how tired and worn-out you are; I can see it now as I never saw it before, and all your sleep has left you. Would you like to sleep so long, so fast and all alone?’

‘No, my love; I am tired and weary to an extent; but not so much so as you seem

to think, though I should be glad of a little rest when the Master sees it is time to take it - but this is not our rest; that remaineth. No, dear, I am not anxious to go, because I don't think my work is done for the present, even though we have had a somewhat long and hard fight. Neither do I wish to go first; that I think belongs to you, for the keenest of the suffering has been yours, and I am confident that He will remember that it has been so; but don't be afraid, little woman, we are not at the end of the day yet.'

'Then give up work for a little while, my lad, and step back out of the danger you are courting for the present.'

'I would if I were Master instead of steward, my love, and you should not have to ask me to do so twice; but you remember the promise I made to St. Clear to follow Jesus; when I first met him on the other side I renewed it, and if there has ever been one hour when it has been necessary to watch that promise more than another it is now, and you are too faithful to Christ to ask me to be otherwise. No, darling, much as I love you, I now know I love Him more, and I cannot give up or rest until He bids me do so.'

'Come ye apart with me and rest a while.'

The voice sounded clear, soft and firm, like the musical chime of a distant bell floating upon the breath of a summer evening. Both Elinor and Ernest heard it and looked with wondering astonishment first at each other and then towards the door. It was no unknown nor unrecognised, and the message with which it announced the arrival of a friend was one calculated to allay rather than excite alarm, but none the less his presence at such a juncture was portentous, and the quick workings of the mind of either detected a possibly veiled meaning in the consoling words, which in spite of hope filled the excited Elinor with new fears,

As she wondered St. Clear entered.

'You await commands and I bring them,' was his greeting; 'and the purport of them is fully expressed in the words of the Master with which I heralded my presence. Overtaxed and weary from a long and nobly-sustained fight I am commissioned to say that you must rest.'

'Must!' ejaculated Ernest, as the definite emphasis laid upon the command reached him. But not of necessity if I am not so weary as you suppose.'

'Though you are but now risen from repose and have not yet begun to work you will obey it if you are loyal and obedient. But this is not the case. Have we not toiled together, and do I not know the nature and the weariness of the burden you have sustained? The Master also knows of it, and bids you rest.'

'Not upon the instant,' he pleaded with painful anxiety. 'I will at once prepare for it, and if you will allow me only six weeks, I will be content to do as you desire.'

'Is the tenure of your life so far assured that you can, with confidence, arrange for

six weeks ahead?' he asked quietly.

'I did not wish to presume, but only pleaded for so much grace,' he replied with apologetic humility. 'In that time our winter session will draw to a close, and I can so arrange that my work may be divided for a time, and set me free; but it is absolutely impossible for me to find anyone to take my place now upon the instant.'

'Have you not yet learned the lesson that with God all things are possible, or does the consciousness of impossibility arise because your eyes are turned away from the purposes of the Lord after the unwise desires of your own heart? Are you trying to deceive yourself with the idea that six weeks hence you will be more willing to relinquish your labour than you are at the present moment? If so, let me assure you that I am not to be blinded by such shallow sophistries. Listen to me. My commission is to bid you stand ready at any moment to lay down the weapons of this warfare and rest when the command of the Father is given. The tale of your strength is well-nigh told, the period of your present duty is expiring, the time of rest is at hand. There are other days and other duties in the future, and God apportions every man's strength to the service He requires from Him. Try as we will we cannot understand His thoughts, neither does He reveal to us more than He perceives it is desirable for us to know. The extension of His kingdom depends upon our ready and prompt obedience. Has not your past experience made you already aware of this? God knows, and though when He calls He does not always choose to explain, we know that in the light of the afterwards all mysteries will be cleared and we shall see - how many times have we done so heretofore - that His wisdom is perfect and His dark purposes full of unexpected mercies. He does not change His purpose when He sees it desirable to change His ministers or His ministries. It may be that He has present work for us elsewhere, while He infuses into the Brotherhood some element of success which your presence prevents, or in the secret of His design He may have other purposes, by means of which He can bring you the help and assistance for lack of which you are now overpowered. I know not what may be, but this I do know - He understands, and our reasonable service just now is willing obedience by resting till the morning comes.'

Pawley sat with his elbow upon the arm of his chair and his hand covering his eyes all the time St. Clear was speaking; but Elinor, who had risen from her knees when first she heard his voice, stood beside her husband, clinging to his left hand, as if to protect him from one who would take him away. Her eyes were fixed with a keen scrutiny upon their exalted visitor, and as he breathed his gentle consolations, her hopes and fears alternated according as she construed the problematic significance of his words. The effects of her first discovery still influenced her, and love bade her beware; it was, therefore, not to be wondered at that her fears more easily predominated, until the covert suggestions of change, other duties and another day demanded the most gloomy construction, and in her renewed fear she appealed to him.

‘What is it you really mean - why do you speak to us in such dark sayings? What is this rest, this change and other work you speak of? Oh, please forgive me if, in the agony of my fear for him, I forget the reverence due to your condition, but my soul is full of wild alarms. So tell me, for God’s sake, tell me, that the rest you speak of is not the sleep of death.’

‘Calm your distress, my sister, with the assurance that my language had no such allusion; there are other nights than that you speak of, as there are other morrows than that of eternity. If Ernest will be obedient to our desires, the work in which we are jointly engaged is not yet done. So far, we have several times found it desirable to change the form and course of our labours, having opened opportunities where others, if willing, might have followed us and carried on the work we had begun - the possibilities were set before them, and the demonstration clearly established that the old gospel and the old effects thereof still survive, if men will only accept the covenanted conditions. The work we have been able to do in these various departments is the answer of Jesus Christ through a single individual to the age, that simple faith, full consecration and willing obedience to the pure gospel He expounded and practised is enough to solve every problem and save the world today; also that He is here to do it, in the lives of loyal servants, in an incarnation as real and tangible as when He walked and ministered in Galilee. What we have already accomplished, thousands are now able to bear testimony to. We have already touched the political, social, moral, commercial, religious and criminal classes, and come off “more than conquerors,” as He promised we should. But at the first our work was confined to individuals or small groups of persons; in the Brotherhood we have brought one man into contact with the masses in complicated and organised form, and the victory has been equally significant. Within the circle of our membership you have enclosed followers of every denomination - Catholic and Protestant, Church and Dissent, Christian and Secularist. You have swept the political gamut, from the most intolerant Conservative to the Anarchist. All ranks and conditions of men and women have been brought together and held by the influence of one man. This also has been seen and recognised, neither has the work been done by formalism or creed, by “shibboleth” or “sibboleth,” by party or by faction, but by the golden rule of Christ, which is still able to save “to the uttermost.” So much for the past and the allaying of your fears. Now the “Lord is mindful of His servants” even as men set store by that which is of greatest intrinsic value. Though Ernest may not be emulated by hirelings and formalists, though the existence of the Brotherhood may be a standing reproach to boasting phariseeism and hollow profession, God appreciates, and perhaps by withdrawing your husband for a time sees His way to accentuating the work we have done and making it spring into a fuller life and energy by reason of a period of gloom.’

‘But is the Brotherhood to be closed when its work has only just begun to be felt?’ cried the sorrow-stricken Pawley.

'My brother,' and St. Clear advanced a step to lay his hand tenderly upon the still bowed head of his co-worker, 'Christ might have asked the same question about His Church when He reached His Gethsemane. How little had He accomplished! What an awfully black outlook lay before Him! But His work was God's, and the gospel of truth and redemption will ever remain so. In that sure fact lies the certainty of its ultimate success. God remains, and with Him the gospel is unchangeable; men come and go, but the truth abides. This work of the Brotherhood, in so far as it is true, is God's. If your duty has been to plant, and some other has to come after you to water it, you may be sure it is well. If your absence from it for a time will contribute to its health and strength, can you say such will not be well? or if He bids you rest while others discover the value of your presence, in the benefit your labours have had upon the neighbourhood, and wake to the fact that you are worthy of the assistance they now withhold, will not that also be well? This command to rest in the thick of the fight, and when the burden of the day lies heaviest upon your shoulders, is a trial of your faith - a test of loyal, unwavering obedience. "See that you refuse not Him that speaketh," for come what will -

*"God sits in the calm of eternal power
To guide the loom of the life of man;
He sees its warp and its weft each hour
Weaving some part of His infinite plan:
He knows the use of its myriad threads -
Each costly tint in the rich design;
And the shuttles are thrown with a matchless skill
For the hand of the Weaver is divine."*

The intensity of Pawley's grief subsided somewhat as St. Clear continued to speak to him, but his voice was broken and husky as he took his visitor's hand and without daring to look him in the face thanked him for all he had hitherto done.

'I have no right to complain whatever God chooses to do with me,' he went on; 'if I had only been one half as faithful as yourself, the work need not have seen this interruption. It is not you, but I who have so miserably, failed. May God have mercy upon me and forgive me.' Here he completely broke down, but St. Clear made no attempt to answer, and let him weep. 'I will try and bear the chastisement I so well deserve; but, oh, it will break my heart, I know it will.'

'You sadly mistake my purpose, Ernest, if you think there is any charge of failure preferred against you. If I have conveyed to you any idea but that of commendation for the work you have done, I have wrongly discharged my mission, for you have aided us in our work far beyond our expectations; of this receive my most confident assurance. I will not, however, prolong this interview - you must sleep, but before I leave you let me remind you of the advice you gave your wife before my arrival - remember all the way by which God has brought you hither, and in the light of the

past trust Him now. Already Elinor and myself can see the silver lining to this cloud, and when the shower of your tears has passed over you will see the sunshine of His love. At present you are neither pensioned nor placed on the retired list; our companionship will not cease; even while you will be resting we shall be with you; and when God speaks again, when the cloudy pillar moves forward once more, we shall be beside you to march forward to other victories. Now, dry your tears. Lift up your eyes, heart, hopes, faith, and let us be ready to answer when the Master calls!

‘I will try to do so; but this is the hardest lesson I have yet had to learn. I had hoped I could say “Thy will be done,” without a reservation, but the thought of leaving all those poor fellows is too much for me.’

‘Who said you are leaving them? I did not! I have simply said you must hold yourself ready to rest, and all beyond that must be left to God.’

‘I thank you for that one ray of comfort; it helps to bring the resignation nearer. Must I rest at once?’

‘That too is in the Father’s hands. I can only say get ready to do so. He will speak, and when He does be ready to obey.’

Pawley again reached his hand.

‘Forgive me for my unbelief,’ he cried, ‘but I see my way more clearly now. I will trust Him and not be afraid, but come when it may I feel that I shall be able to answer “Thy will be done - even so, Father, for so it seemeth good unto Thee.”’

Chapter XLIV - Conclusion

Let us pause for an instant, before we raise the curtain upon the final scene of our story, to remind ourselves of those things of which we have been witnesses in our companionship with Ernest Pawley. St. Clear has already recalled to our hero some of the desirable effects produced by their partnership - prejudices uprooted, walls of partition broken down, chaos reduced to order, and discord changed to harmony. But Pawley, left to himself, quietly retraced the whole ground again and discovered far more cause for gratitude - saw far more work accomplished than he had hitherto imagined. The experiences he had encountered, the trials of faith upon which he had entered, the hopeful confidence in which he had struck out from the beaten track of theology and pushed his way into the lost path, once so plainly mapped out by the Christ, leading straight to the Fatherland through implicit and literal acceptance of the promises, had ushered in a new order of life, or rather had demonstrated to him the fact that the essential features of the Christ life, which separated him so widely from the rest of humanity, were never intended to remain unique, but the universal heritage of redeemed mankind. He had set out upon his pilgrimage with two preliminary ideas in his mind - God must be true, and the way to reach Him, which

is the object of every true life, was by the strait gate and undeviating path. In his departure he had wisely consulted the only authentic Guide to the course he intended to pursue; had counted the cost, noted the warnings of difficulties, tribulations, oppositions and possibly untimely death; made himself acquainted so far as possible with the cross he was expected to carry with him, and also carefully noted the things he was instructed to leave behind. On the other hand he estimated the promised benefits which should replace every sacrifice during the journey, and the ultimate reward to which that way alone would lead. When all this was done and both sides of the question were fairly before him for decision as to what he would do, he had to decide the one point whether it was wise and commendable to relinquish all that was real, tangible and present in favour of the visionary, unsubstantial and prospective. Worldly wisdom and interests said 'No!' most emphatically; seductive friends versed in the intricacies of theology had assured him that while the theory of the plan was to be accepted, owing to the metaphors and figures employed it was a failure in practice necessitating an adaptation, by which many of its difficulties had been surmounted. He had, however, abided by his first axiom that God must be true, and in the light of such a faith he shouldered his cross and commenced his pilgrimage.

In our search after truth we have followed him to watch the success or failure of his experiment. With that natural sympathy one cannot but express towards suffering, we have pitied him in the ills he has been constrained to bear; but let us not be misled by the idea that these are in any way indicative of infidelity or mistake. The so called misfortunes he has endured have been no more than the scheduled possibilities wherein it is distinctly set forth: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' but as a codicil to that is added 'Fear not, I have overcome the world.' We have seen with what undaunted courage he has met the trials, it is equally desirable that we notice how he has also entered into the promise of the reward. He has been cast down and perplexed on every side, but the God who was, and is still, true did in any case suffer him to be tempted above that he was able to bear. Certainly he has again and again been tried until we would hear the snapping of the strands of his confidence in the superhuman strain that was placed upon him, but the angel of the Lord delivered him, and he was saved because he endured. The out-reaching hand of his intrepid faith grasped the substance of that he hoped for - he could not see it for the veil that fell between; but faith pushed through the veil, and on that other side of life's mystery, in the holiness of God where all things are resolved into a unit, touch and sight are one, therefore by faith he saw and grasped the promise which God must needs fulfil. This willing obedience and literal following of the Christ to the very confines of death has naturally brought the disciple to the place where his Master stood; but whereas the Leader died the follower is saved because death is swallowed up in victory, the everlasting doors are lifted up, and through the corridor of the tomb a great light streams, lighting the Church Militant into heaven and the Church Triumphant back again to earth. By this 'new and living way' the communion

of saints continues, and the angels who ministered to the Shepherd still people the hills and vales of the Beulah Land in their ministry to the sheep. This is the one supreme fact Pawley had established, the one great possibility to which his experience appeals, the marvellous almost incredible fulness of the Christian life to which we may aspire and thus demonstrate that certainty and power of faith which shall silence unbelief and subject the kingdoms unto Christ.

Is this actually attainable? For answer we point to the Bible testimony of angelic ministry and its restoration between St. Clear and Pawley.

To such a clearly-expressed duty as St. Clear had pointed out to him - far more in the shape of an actual command than his friend was in the habit of speaking - - Pawley had no alternative but to prepare to bow; and at once he discovered how much he could lighten the burden of his daily labours, as soon as he became compelled to allow others to bear a proportionate part thereof. A rearrangement of matters allowed him to leave the Brotherhood for several hours in the day in charge of his ever-willing secretary, Alan Macdonald, with the assistance of his own son, and the rest he was thus enabled to secure not only relieved him of his night study, but at the same time materially contributed to his health and comfort

So one week passed by and nothing further had been heard of the momentarily-expected order to retire. Every day witnessed an improvement in his appearance and manner, and the members began to congratulate themselves that the whispered crisis had been averted, the danger was passing over, and the feared disruption had been avoided. The president himself began to indulge the same hopes, and with the delay of the message beyond even the second week, and a further improvement in his condition, he ventured to make a cautious encroachment upon the rest he had taken, with the result that before a third week had gone, in spite of the counsel of his wife and best friends, he was nearly as hard at work as ever.

At this time he fell a victim to a third attack of influenza, at which Elinor took alarm, but he laughed and went on with his work. The best advice in such cases was to work it off rather than yield; he had succeeded in doing so twice before and was able to do it again, therefore he ridiculed the idea of lying up for a day or two. Wait till Sunday came, when he would take a leaf out of George Whitefield's book and get a good pulpit sweat, and by Monday Richard would be himself again.

But when Sunday did come Elinor was painfully aware of the fact that he was in no condition to leave his bed, and begged to be allowed to send and ask Dr. Ayres or the Rev. William Barnett - another recent ministerial addition - to take his place. But Ernest had failed to recollect that thunder clouds frequently arise against the wind, and because the premonition did not come from the expected quarter he failed to take cognisance of it, and must needs be slain before he would consent to yield. He was willing to admit his weakness, but not his conquest, and consented, if his determined effort should not prove successful, to spend the morrow in bed until the evening, when he had to preside over a special meeting of the Salvation Army for

which he had lent his hall, and after that he was willing further to nurse himself until Thursday.

Elinor knew the futility of arguing with him when once he had made up his mind; she could foresee the result, but to contest the point would only hasten it, and so with a heavy heart she was constrained to give way, hoping for something to transpire to control and yet protect him.

When he ascended the platform that morning his appearance revived all the recently-dissipated fears of his congregation, and much anxious concern was experienced as to whether he would be able to go through the service. The subject he had to discuss was, as usual, a contentious one, and likely to open up a keen debate, which was always permitted in the morning. But the lack of usual energy and the painfully evident effort with which he occupied scarcely half his allotted time won the sympathy of his people, who reserved their attack until he had recovered himself and the battle could be fought more even-handedly.

A host of friends pressed on him afterwards and begged him to allow a substitute to take his place in the evening or let the service take the shape of a sacred concert, for which a most excellent programme could be easily arranged.

‘There is not the slightest necessity for any alteration whatever to be considered,’ he replied with what animation he could command. ‘There is plenty of fight left in me yet. I shall rest to-morrow until night, and I have arranged for others to take my lecture on Tuesday and the class on Wednesday. That will give me two clear days in which to get as right as ever by Thursday.’

They shook their heads in sorrowful disagreement, but at an anxious sign from Elinor refrained from contesting the point. He was driven home and tried but failed to take any refreshment, neither had he strength to resist his wife’s demand that he submit to be treated as an invalid for the afternoon. Seeing his condition she secretly provided for his place to be supplied at night, if necessary, and she could gain her wish; but with the hour approaching he braced himself up by a marvellous determination and took his place for the sermon, though he gladly accepted the offer of Mr. Barnett to conduct the devotional part of the service.

The usual list of engagements were made, together with Pawley’s subjects for the following Sunday, so confident was he of his usual recuperative powers; but after the display of weakness and break up which his discourse revealed, no one expected to see him fulfil his cherished intentions, and there was a melancholy pathos attached to the coincidence of the last hymn which many were too deeply moved to join in singing..

‘My times are in Thy hands:

My God I wish them there;

My life, my friends, my soul I leave,

Entirely to Thy care.’

It needed not to be announced that the dreaded blow had at length fallen upon the warrior. It was now too late to intervene the shield, and they who would now saw their inability to save him. Now there was nothing left but to bow before the sorrowful dispensation and say 'Thy will be done'.

Mr. Barnett and Harold assisted the staggering preacher from the platform, too prostrate for either the silent hopes or tears of his people to help him; and a moment later an electric thrill passed through the waiting congregation as it was whispered, -

'He has fainted in his private room!'

In a few minutes Harold passed through the hall to ascertain if the carriage was quite ready, and reported that his father had recovered consciousness, and they wished to get him home as speedily as possible. Then through serried ranks of sorrowing, tearful friends the overworked labourer was more carried than escorted to the vehicle that hurried him home.

Through the long night the doctor and Elinor battled with the raging fever, and not until the morning had broken was she able to carry the welcome news to the friends who had waited so long that he had fallen into a quiet sleep.

At last she, without whose co-operation and devotion Ernest Pawley would have been lost in the eddies of the stream of life, breathed somewhat freely. The steward of her God, over whom she had been given stewardship, had been returned to her charge for rest and up-building. The ministering angels of the God he served had at length unbuckled his armour, sheathed his sword, removed his helmet, and he was called out of the din of strife, the savage onrush of battle, to rest under the ministry of love. Elinor's heart had long hungered for such a silence, for a brief return of those sweet communings which clothed their early married life with a Sychar's well here, a walk to Emmaus there, yonder a transfiguration, and yet again a vestibule of heaven. Those old times had perforce been changed of late; not that Ernest had grown weary of them or that the crowding duties of life had made her appreciate them the less; the loss, of which she never grew unmindful, was part of the sacrifice she had made to the work she had taken her part in for the Master's sake. Sometimes she had grieved to think what a minor part had fallen to her share, but was she right in such an estimate? Is not the part played by the silkworm as essential to the royal robe as that of the weaver or the *modiste*? The careful labours of unknown builders whose dust was lost in earth thousands of years gone by to-day becomes a revelation of the light of science in those long gone years. There is nothing small that is nobly done, nothing true can ever be insignificant, the atom is fraught with incomprehensible potentialities when its destinies are fulfilled; and so it must be, when we acquire the power to trace results, that we shall discover the mightiest issues of humanity turned upon diamond points, and they who have sorrowfully mourned over useless, wasted lives will be found to be the true heroes of magnificent victories. In that day 'many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.' The question is not how much we have done, but have we done what we could, and as best we could? This will

determine the verdict of the great assize. Whether we have stewardship of one talent or ten rests with God, it is the use we make of that which has been committed to our care for which we are responsible; of that alone let us be ever watchful and all the rest will be well.

But whatever of these thoughts may have troubled Elinor upon occasion she had no time for them in the present. Her love had been given back to her for the time, and it behoved her to make the best of present opportunities. For a little while her will would be supreme. No matter what took place outside she was now justified in keeping it from him; apart from the doctor no one could come to disturb them, and she was satisfied that in her numerous volunteers - anxious to do all that was possible in the emergency - all the general arrangements of her household would be well attended to. Viewed in this light, from the first she discerned a silver lining to the cloud. To be alone with her husband for a few days, to have no other care than to minister to and anticipate his slightest wish, was a pleasure against which his prostration did not weigh so heavily as it otherwise might have done. But St. Clear had done much to remove her burden of suspense by his assurance, all she had to do was firmly to discharge her duty, and beyond that she could trust her God.

For more than three hours his sleep continued, which to the best of her knowledge was a record for more than half a year gone by; and when he woke, almost before his face was sponged, a light and tempting breakfast was set before him in which, with all the cunning artfulness of woman's tact, she proposed to keep him company. Then, even before his cup of tea was half finished, she made her first move to prevent the thousand and one inquiries she knew would be leaping over his tongue like a natural waterfall.

Now, my lad, I want you to understand that you have had a very narrow escape and are at present in hospital - a prisoner under my special care and jurisdiction.'

'Just an instant, love, before you lock me in,' he began.

'Not half an instant, my pretty little caged lion.' Then she paused to lean over the bed and steal a kiss. 'You have had your way so far, and in your wilfulness have fallen; now till I get you well and strong again, I am going to be as inexorable as you have been defiant. I am just going to serve up my gander with the sauce you made for the goose. Therefore, if you are such an excellent chef as you would have me to believe, don't grumble to eat of your own dishes.'

But, my dear, I only want to see Macdonald.'

'I have already seen him. Everything is arranged, and he went away an hour ago.'

'But there are twenty things he knows nothing about.'

'If there are only so many, we are not half so badly off as I anticipated. If anything arises he cannot manage, he will come or send to me.'

'But -'

‘My dear boy, all “buts” are better outside the house; they are not advisable in a sick-room. If you have half the wisdom I give you credit for, you will remember the promise you gave to St. Clear. Now is your chance for rest, take it. You are no longer able to work for the time, therefore don’t attempt it, but listen to something I have to say to you.’ She had been busying herself in a multitude of little comforts about the room as she spoke so far; but now, having dispensed with the tray and put the finishing touches to the hearth and bed, she took him in her arms, and love brimming in trembling tenderness from her eyes, she kissed him again as she laid him back on the pillows, then took his hand and sat beside him. ‘Do you remember the quiet hours we used to have before we came to London - before the storm of our troubles broke upon us? I often wonder whether you ever think of them, love, because the life of a man is so very different to that of woman. You have so many things to occupy your attention, but I am always turning back to the past, wondering if it will ever be possible for those old sweet times to come back again. Perhaps it is foolish of me and yet I am by no means sure it is so -

*“Men love just as they spend an hour
In picnic glade beside a river,
Then pass along; but woman’s heart
In memory haunts the spot for ever.”*

I almost think God must have heard these yearning prayers and granted me their answer in your indisposition. I did not want you to be ill - would rather have sacrificed my own desire than you should suffer - but since God has ordered it so let us, for the few days He has granted out of our busy lives, turn back again and enjoy the quiet of the old times.’

She knew how to deal with him - had well learned the art of gaining her own way without him suspecting that he was subject to management, always providing that he had no idea of duty calling him. She did not wish to excite him by conversation, but sitting beside his bed, hand linked in hand, she proposed to read to him. She had an accumulation of things she had long wished him to hear - poems of Miss Havergal’s that had stirred her own soul, ministered to and dissolved her doubts, satisfied her hunger, quenched her thirst, and she knew how he would appreciate them if ever a time should come when he would be able to listen to their music. The time had come at length, and reaching the tiny volumes she began her ministry to his restoration, reading those soft, soothing songs of a murmuring whisper she finally ceased, but held the hand and watched gratefully until at the end of another two hours he said, -

‘Go on, dear, I’m listening.’

She smiled, but said nothing; only moved to rest herself and steal a kiss before she resumed.

So the day wore away, every hour bearing testimony to Elinor’s tact and skill as a

nurse. The doctor came, spoke cheerily and counselled the most absolute quiet, to which the patient made no reply, and Elinor followed the man of medicine from the room to share with him a secret that was causing her some anxiety.

Ill as her husband certainly was, even with the experience of last night's collapse fresh upon him, she was afraid that the improvement he had made during the day would suggest the possibility of his keeping his promise to preside at the Army meeting at night. She had already taken every precaution against his absence having a bad effect upon the meeting - which she knew would be his great plea - by having a notice posted at the Brotherhood doors, urging members to make the occasion a success and so save the president any anxiety as to the desired result, and had already been assured that it would be regarded as an occasion of demonstrated sympathy. But wild as her own fear may appear to be, she knew her husband, and if the dreaded idea once entered his mind that he ought to make an effort to be present as a matter of duty, nothing short of St. Clear's actual command she was afraid would overrule him; and such an action was one of the last things she expected, because it was contrary to what she knew of St. Clear to interfere in a matter of another's free will. The doctor laughed at her anxiety; such a suggestion would in itself be a sign of delirium she could easily prevent, and if she imagined it might arise she had better make preparation for her own satisfaction, but so far as he was concerned he ridiculed the idea as an impossibility.

One has to live even with the best of men to know them. Elinor had lived with Ernest, the doctor had not. Towards five o'clock the patient lost his interest in reading, did not wish to be spoken to, though his watchful wife saw that his mind was not so quiet as before. Something troubled him of which he did not speak, but she divined it and began to pray for strength for the battle she knew lay in the near distance. The doctor might be right in one respect - the proposition might possibly be due in a sense to delirium, for she saw how the heat of his head was increasing and only a moderate amount of fever was sufficient to produce such an effect, but the dreaded issue from whatever cause was now 'past all doubt and she trembled to think what the result might be.

It came just after six.

'Will you send for a carriage to be here at a quarter to eight?' he asked.

'What for, my love?' she inquired with an assumption of ignorance.

'I shall not be able to walk down to-night.'

'Certainly not! You must keep quiet and rest.'

'Elinor,' he said, 'we entered into an arrangement, I have, so far, made no attempt to break; don't, my darling, go back from your word. I am far more able to take the chair to-night than I was to preach last night, and I intend to do so.'

'Listen to me for one moment, my lad,' she entreated, her eyes full of tears and

her heart exposing its dread.

‘Let me, if you love me, persuade you for once to give up this foolish, headstrong idea of what I know you to conceive to be your duty. To attempt to go out to-night means certain death to you - the doctor says it would be madness to think of leaving your bed. I asked him because I feared what you would propose. If you rest you will be better in a few days; but to get up I am certain will be to end both your work and your life. I will not think of myself, dear, I would try to be willing to let you go if God demanded it - but would you bring St. Clear’s work to an untimely end? Would you dare to take the responsibility of such a course? You know how he told you that work was not yet done, but would be continued presently if you were only wise and rested when God opened the door for you to do so. Surely that door is open wide enough now, and will you break the solemn promise made to him? You are not expected - everyone knows it would be madness to attempt to go, and the members have expressed their determination to make this effort a greater success than if you were present. The captain and leader of the band have been here and know how impossible it is for you to go; so now, let me persuade you not to tempt Providence, but be content to rest, and the report we shall get presently will, I am sure, be such as will surprise you.’

‘My dear little woman, it is hard - God only knows how hard - to refuse you anything; but one thing is certain to me at this moment - I have to make a choice between my loyalty to God and my love for you. I know my duty darling and I must do it.’

He meant it, and God who reads the secrets of all hearts knew it, accepting the will for the deed. The meeting was a far greater success than Ernest either anticipated or imagined, but he knew nothing of it, for the fever surged upon him, and for four days he was swaying upon the pivot of life and death, the former prayed and hoped for, the latter feared. Through the awful struggle until the crisis was over Elinor could not be persuaded to leave his side, even when St. Clear offered his services as watcher and minister, but heaven and earth combined to save the stricken soldier and God granted their ultimate reward.

When the doubt was shifted from the life of Pawley to the continuance of the Brotherhood through the period demanded for his complete restoration, many were found who repented the attitude they had taken towards a work the value of which was only admitted - though previously recognised - when the guiding and controlling hand was paralysed, and offers of help rolled in and were accepted freely. Elinor knew her husband’s mind and wishes, and so far as possible directed the management according to his ideas. But he was absent. The new minds introduced could not adapt themselves readily to the almost untrammelled programme; the woman’s hand had not the strength to control the revival of the old contest for sectional and party supremacy; all claimed equal authority in the absence of the king, and it was speedily discovered that until Pawley’s return all practical progress

was at an end.

As soon as the invalid was able to travel a consultation was held as to where he should spend his lengthened period of recuperation, and finally it was agreed, at St. Clear's suggestion, that he should be located in a remote corner of Angleshire, where distance and other circumstances would protect him alike from consultation and rumour reaching him. Elinor, of course, would go with him, and St. Clear would advise her as necessary, while Harold with the family would remain behind, and the former with Macdonald would do their best to keep the Brotherhood going as effectively as possible.

It was no use. St. Clear could only perform the gigantic task of controlling such a many-sided organisation so long as he had the ready and willing hands of Pawley upon the helmsman's wheel. Neither Christ nor angels can act when necessary connections are broken.

Twice did the indefatigable warrior return and attempt to re-shoulder the cross, but his shattered constitution gave way each time, and finally St. Clear was reluctantly compelled to counsel the closing of the doors indefinitely, and the flock that had been so laboriously and hopefully gathered had to be scattered, having no shepherd.

For the third time Pawley turned his face towards his Angleshire exile, this time carrying his family with him. The quiet of the long-wished-for days has come back again to Elinor, but a black shadow of regret hangs over them. Pawley grows stronger and has won a multitude of friends among the sons of the sea; but day by day in the company of St. Clear he walks along the rugged coast listening to the ceaseless anthem of the Atlantic waves, speculating whether he will ever find such help as will enable him to return and go on with his regrettedly-interrupted labours.

And Brixham! It is years since the doors of the Brotherhood were closed, but it will never be forgotten. Every man knows that Pawley still retains his grip of the premises in the hope of coming back again; and hundreds of men and women, in whose lives he is still a power, pray that the day of his coming may soon dawn. His absence makes a vacancy in the district which only he can fill, and with the hope of bringing this about echoes of invitation reach him ever and anon in his far-away home, as the voices of the common people surged around the Master in the long ago, crying -

*'We would be with Thee, but be Thou with us;
Life's burden presses, come and ease its load;
Teach us to live! Come take our hands and lead us
By Christ's own way towards home, and heaven, and God.'*

THE END

