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their fathers. To do this they must shut their eyes to the obvious goodness of the new teacher, and declare—as they did declare—that the source of His undeniable authority was diabolical, not divine. Their intentions may have been of the best, but it was the second of these alternatives that they adopted. Clinging to the truths of a past age, they flung aside the Truth as it stood before their eyes. No middle course was possible to them; they must either be for Him or against Him. They chose the latter, and in order to stifle this new life which must mean the overthrow of much that they had inherited, they threw themselves into the arms of their bitterest enemies, and took counsel with the Herodians against Him how they might destroy Him.

In the Study.

Hagar.

A Study in Providence.

'An handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.'—Gen. 16^{1}.

It is delightful to pass from the close atmosphere of our overcrowded life, and to find ourselves in this simple and early world. A fresh air seems to blow in our faces, and a charm of youth to move in our hearts. We marvel at the silence and the solitude. Only a few figures animate the landscape as we stand near the pastoral encampment, and look eagerly at the larger tent, where from Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar the great Jewish and Arab races flowed. We watch the birth of nations. The ways of life are uncomplicated; the government is patriarchal; the characters are natural and noble. Faith is the master of being. A deep impression or a new idea is the voice of God.

I.

The Slave.

1. How or when Hagar first became the property of Abraham and Sarah, we are not told; but the fact that she was an Egyptian suggests that they obtained her at the time when, by reason of the famine, they 'went down into Egypt to sojourn there' (Gn 12^{10}), and took her back to Canaan on returning thither. Being a slave, she was absolutely at the disposal of her master, although she may have been happy and contented in Abraham's service; his friendship with God would lead him to show more consideration towards those who were dependent upon him than any ordinary slave-owner into whose hands she might have fallen.

¶ The status of female slaves varied considerably. As in the case of male slaves, the lot of the foreigner was not so favourable as that of a Hebrew or home-born slave. Yet, on the whole, even the foreign captive might enjoy a position of comparative comfort. Note the position of the captive Israelite maiden in the Syrian general's household (2 K $5^{2ff.}$), the confidential relations that subsisted between her and her mistress, and the sympathy displayed by the former with her master's disease. The genial treatment of foreign slaves in pre-exilian times evidently prevailed among other Semitic races besides the Hebrews.[1]

2. Abraham had no doubt acquainted Sarah with the various promises from the Lord which had been made to him. But she was less disposed than he to await God's own time and mode of accomplishing the purpose He had declared. She desired a son, and a device entered her mind—a device which seems strange to us, but which was probably in conformity with then existing customs, such as still subsist in India and in China. She proposed that Abraham should take her maid as a kind of secondary wife, so that if any children came from this union, they might, as the children of her handwoman, be accounted hers. There was nothing in this that could have appeared wrong to Abraham, though to us it wears an unpleasant aspect; and, in any case, he ought to have waited in faith for the fulfilment of the high promise he had received. It should be noticed, however, that although Abraham had received the assurance of a son, he had not yet been told that Sarah was to be that son's mother; and he may have supposed that the course which was taken was in full accordance with the Divine intention. It is clear that Sarah herself had altogether abandoned the hope of giving birth to a child, and that it was at her urgency that Abraham consented, probably against

[1] Owen C. Whitehouse, in *HDB*, iv. 466.

his better judgment, to become a party to this expedient.

3. The evil consequences of Sarah's scheme became apparent first of all in Hagar. Agur the son of Jakeh says: 'For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear. For a servant when he reigneth, and a fool when he is filled with meat; for an odious woman when she is married, and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.' Naturally this half-heathen girl, when she found that her son would probably inherit all Abraham's possessions, forgot herself, and looked down on her present nominal mistress. A flood of new fancies possessed her mind and her whole demeanour became insulting to Sarah. The slave-girl could not be expected to sympathize with the purpose which Abraham and Sarah had in view when they made use of her. They had calculated on finding only the unquestioning, mechanical obedience of the slave, even while raising her practically to the dignity of a wife. They had fancied that even to the deepest feelings of her woman's heart, even in maternal hopes, she would be plastic in their hands, their mere passive instrument. But they entirely miscalculated. The slave had feelings as quick and tender as their own, a life and a destiny as tenaciously clung to as their God-appointed destiny. Instead of simplifying their life they merely added to it another source of complexity and annoyance.

4. Hagar's attitude towards her mistress was natural enough, but it was cruel. It was more than cruel: it was mean. God had given her what her mistress had not, and she presumed on the gift to injure another's heart. She used God's kindness as a means of unkindness, that miserable thing which we so often do! Yet, she was young, she felt herself a mother, she was an untrained slave: it was all natural enough, we cannot blame her too much. Then she possessed that quick intelligence and fiery temper which is formed where the glowing sun of Egypt nourishes women like Cleopatra, and we must think of this when we judge her action.

¶ It is ridiculous for a man to go and treat a negro as though he were a demon, and then express surprise that he is not an angel. Even we Missionaries are reaping the harvest of this oppression, for the worst type of convert is a redeemed slave.[1]

5. Then think of Sarah, of her heart, her thoughts, her position; bring the two women together, and we may well imagine how high, how fierce the clashing was. And the quarrel made daily evil in the tent. The mistress used her authority and punished her servant. She also assailed her husband with the language of recrimination and censure, as if he had been faulty in the matter, and laid at his door all the blame of a transaction which was entirely of her own devising. Abraham could scarcely take the girl's part against his life companion; and Hagar fled into the wilderness, unable to bear her life.

¶ George Moore asked Lord Brougham if he thought the Empress of the French had much influence over her husband in Church matters. 'She has just the influence,' he replied, 'that every woman has on her husband: she nags, *nags*, NAGS, till she gets her own way.'[2]

II.

Hagar's First Exile.

1. When Hagar fled from her mistress she naturally took the way to her old country. Instinctively her feet carried her to the land of her birth. And as she crossed the desert country where Palestine, Egypt, and Arabia meet, she halted by a fountain, spent with her flight and awed by the solitude and stillness of the desert.

¶ The place seems to have been somewhere in the north-east corner of Arabia Deserta, on the road from Egypt to Assyria. The word wilderness applied to the region is not therefore used in that restricted sense in which we often find it employed in the Bible, as signifying simply an uninhabited region devoted to pasturage; it was a dreary waste of rock and sand, seared by south winds that came hissing from the great Arabian desert; offering the traveller no better shelter from the scorching sun than now and then the shadow of a great rock; a desolate and thirsty land, with only here and there a fountain where the pilgrim paused to refresh himself and gain strength for the weary leagues before him. It was near one of these infrequent fountains, in the midst of this unfriendly region, that the angel of the Lord found this Egyptian girl.[3]

2. Egypt was farther than she had bargained for. Her strength was fast ebbing away; her slender store of bread and fruit was gone; and, alone in the desert, she felt her own insignificance as she had never felt it before, and flung herself down by this wayside well, there to wait till death put an end to her sufferings. No one cared for her. No one wanted her. Why fight any longer? Let her lie down and die. 'It is enough: take away my life.'

[1] D. Crawford, *Thinking Black*, 195.

[2] S. Smiles, *George Moore*, 279.

[3] Washington Gladden, *Things New and Old: Discourses of Christian Truth and Life*, 153.

¶ Charlotte Brontë, in her wonderfully powerful novel of *Jane Eyre*, describes her heroine as fleeing from her master's house because she felt that to remain would be dishonourable. The circumstances were entirely different, but we can conceive of Jane Eyre's passionate words as having been those of the Egyptian slave girl: 'I looked neither to rising sun, nor smiling sky, nor waking nature. He who is taken out to pass through a fair scene to the scaffold, thinks not of the flowers that smile on his road, but of the block and the axe-edge; of the disseverment of bone and vein; of the grave gaping at the end; and I thought of drear flight and homeless wandering—and oh! with agony I thought of what I left. . . . It was a barbed arrow-head in my breast, it tore me when I tried to extract it; it sickened me when remembrance thrust it further in. Birds began singing in brake and copse: birds were faithful to their mates; birds were emblems of love. What was I? In the midst of my pain of heart, I abhorred myself. . . . Still I could not turn, nor retrace one step. God must have led me on. . . . I was weeping wildly as I walked along my solitary way: fast, fast I went as one delirious. A weakness, beginning inwardly, extending to the limbs, seized me, and I fell: I lay on the ground some minutes, pressing my face to the wet turf.'[1]

3. We are now introduced to that very exalted and mysterious being, the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the Lord is certainly distinguished from Jehovah; yet the names by which he is called, the powers which he assumes to wield, the honour which is paid to him, show that in him there was at least a special Presence of God. He seems to speak sometimes in his own name, and sometimes as if he were not a created personality, but only a veil or organ of the Higher Nature that spoke and acted through him. Thus he assures Hagar, as if speaking in the character of an ambassador from God, that 'the Lord had heard her affliction.' She should bear a son. Her motherhood should be complete. Nor should he be lost in the multitude. Nay, he should be the father of a multitude, and his name should enshrine for her the sympathy of God. Ishmael—'God hears'—that should be his name. So motherhood, and the great people whom she held in her womb, and the thought of God's tenderness went with her all the way back across the desert, and irradiated her face when again she met the frown of Sarah. What were the harsh words to her, when her soul was companying with these exalted thoughts! And then, to have them, to cherish them within, to believe them, and to live for them—what an education for a woman, what self-development, what power, what a life above the world were hidden in their folds! Hagar was being made.

[1] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ii. 146.

'Return and submit!' was the Angel's message. Everything depended upon her obedience; for in Sarah's service and in Abraham's home Hagar's son must be born if he is to be blessed after this fashion. Surely it was worth while to go back and put up with a great deal that was not pleasant when it would mean so much to her child later on. And, besides this, Hagar carried with her the consciousness of having received a direct message from One who had been unknown to her hitherto, 'a God that seeth.'

¶ 'Looking up, I, with tear-dimmed eyes, saw the mighty Milky Way. Remembering what it was—what countless systems there swept space like a soft trace of light—I felt the might and strength of God. Sure was I of His efficiency to save what He had made: convinced I grew that neither earth should perish, nor one of the souls it treasured. I turned my prayer to thanksgiving: the Source of Life was also the Saviour of spirits.'[2]

4. The quiet glow of hopefulness with which Hagar returned to Abraham's encampment should possess the spirit of every one of us. Hagar's prospects were not in all respects inviting. She knew the kind of treatment she was likely to receive at the hands of Sarah. She was to be a bondwoman still. But God had persuaded her of His care and had given her a hope large enough to fill her heart.

III.

Her Second Exile.

1. Although Hagar returned to her servitude with bright visions of coming prosperity, and these helped her to be submissive until the son was born in whom her hopes centred, yet a great disappointment was ahead which she had to meet.

Fourteen years had been spent with Ishmael in Abraham's home, and probably Hagar had long ago made up her mind that her son would always be there while Abraham lived; but suddenly she was sent away with her child, never to return. Another son had been born into that family who would occupy the position she thought belonged to Ishmael.

After Isaac was born, the growing lad Ishmael must also have learnt that the inheritance was no longer to be his own. It was not, however, till a great family festival was kept in honour of the weaning of the heir that his natural chagrin seems to have found open utterance.

[2] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ii. 146.

In the manner of its celebration emphasis was no doubt laid upon the fact that though born the younger Isaac was destined to displace his elder brother. Ishmael bordered on man's estate, without the self-control of manhood; and it is not at all surprising that the disappointment he could not fail to experience found vent in unconcealed derision. Under cover of sportiveness, it may be, he jeered at the little master, and the exuberant rejoicing made over him, in a way which betrayed the bitterness he really felt.

Ishmael's conduct stung Sarah. 'Wherefore she said, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.' She had probably been meditating some such step, and now she is provoked into uttering what was in her mind. Her child was at a disadvantage alongside of this forward and brilliant boy who had taken such a hold on Abraham's affections. Unwittingly she advised what was really for the good of all concerned: 'God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous . . . for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.' Abraham had given Ishmael a place from which he was unwilling to oust him. He was his firstborn. He had qualities which would fit him to rule a pastoral people. Isaac was as yet but a feeble child. But it was impossible that Abraham could remain divided thus between the one affection and the other; impossible that he should enjoy the lively talk and adventurous exploits of Ishmael and at the same time concentrate his hope on Isaac. And it was not a warlike power Abraham was to found, but a religion. Therefore Ishmael must go. It was good for Ishmael himself: 'also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation.' Isaac *was* the true heir. No jeering allusions to his late birth or his appearance could alter that fact.

Once assured of the will of God, the patriarch no longer hesitated. He 'rose up early in the morning,' and after providing them with such refreshments as they were likely to need on the journey, he sent them away.

¶ It is certain that for living in, and thinking in, I have never since found in the world a place so favourable. And we were driven and pushed into it, as if by Necessity, and its beneficent though ugly little shocks and pushes, shock after shock gradually compelling us thither! 'For a Divinity doth shape our ends, rough-hew them how *we* will': often in my life have I been brought to think of this, as probably every considering person is; and, looking before and after, have felt, though reluctant enough to believe in the importance or significance of so infinitesimally small an atom as oneself, that the Doctrine of a Special Providence is in some sort natural to man.[1]

2. The word translated 'the child' is quite applicable to a lad of Ishmael's age. He is sooner exhausted than his mother, as she would probably be more inured to labour and fatigue than he. She sits down apart, because nothing tortures a parent more than to see, without being able to alleviate, the sufferings of a child. Her grief, and perhaps her resentment, had discouraged and blinded her, for she did not see the neighbouring well till God opened her eyes, and encouraged her by the promise, 'I will make him a great nation.' She was giving up, as if all the promise given her before Ishmael's birth were forgotten, whereas this expulsion was the first step towards its fulfilment. When Ishmael turned his back on the familiar tents, he was in truth setting out to an inheritance far richer, so far as this world goes, than ever fell to Isaac and his sons.

Despairing surrender to fate when effort has reached a certain point—that is in the Oriental character. An English woman would have struggled onward till she died, to save the lad. But Hagar laid the child in the shadow of one of the shrubs, and set her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said, 'Let me not see the death of the child,' and she lifted up her voice and wept.

¶ The Egyptians had a very definite notion of Fate or Destiny, which was personified as the deity Shai. The word for 'destiny,' *šau*, later *šai* (*šhai*), is derived from the verb *šа*, 'decide,' 'define,' the German *bestimmen*; *šai*, therefore, = 'was bestimmt ist,' as in the verse, 'Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rath, Dass man vom Bestem was man hat, Muss scheiden, ja scheiden'; *šai* = 'what *must* be,' unavoidable Fate. We find it in this sense always: even the heresy of Akhenaten did not deny Fate, and the word occurs in the inscriptions of his high priest Meriʾa at el-Amarna (1370 B.C.). A prominent example of its use is in the inscription of Amasis describing the overthrow of Apries at Momemphis (560 B.C.):

'The land was traversed as by the blast of a tempest, destroying their ships [*i.e.* those of the Greek allies of Apries] abandoned by the crews. The [Egyptian] people accomplished their fate [that of the Greeks]; killing their prince [Apries] on his couch, when he had come to repose in his cabin.'

Naturally, unavoidable fate was regarded as evil fate, and *šai* can mean this without qualification. In the 'Israel-Stela' of Merenptah (1230 B.C.), which records the ravaging of Palestine by the Egyptians and the destruction of Israel,

[1] *Reminiscences by Thomas Carlyle*, ii. 244.

the word is 'determined' by the ideograph of a devouring dog: an evil animal was destiny!

Death was the destiny of all, whether the rich man who built himself a pyramid of granite, or the poor *fellah meskīn* who died of heat and labour on the canal-dyke or *gisr*, with none but the fish to see him die. It was an evil destiny, death, and, when one thought upon it, one was disturbed, and tears came to the eyes; the very thought of death was pain and grief; never would one come back from the tomb to see the sun.[1]

3. There was a womanly tenderness in the voice that came to her out of heaven. 'What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad to drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.'

The slave-girl, Hagar, when she fled
From master's wrong and wifely hate,
Fell in the sand-waste as she sped,
Heart-sick and lone and desolate:
Sudden a low sweet music said,—
'Why murmur at thy fate?'

Parting the thicket, so to see
Who spoke in pity,—lo, a face
Looked up upon her yearningly
From a well's eye: in ruth and grace
A fond voice said: '*What aileth thee?—*
God is in every place!'

It was her own young piteous gaze
Glassed in the well-depth's mystery:
Low sang the water's sweet amaze,—
'*God's face! He knows, He watcheth me:*
Through trudge of weary nights and days
The Living One doth see!'[2]

4. This was the second crisis and lesson of Hagar's life. And he who told the story knew the human heart, and the wisdom and kindness of the God whom he brought into contact with the woman's life. For, indeed, as we think of the tale, the care of God for Hagar has in it a peculiar delicacy, is full of thoughtfulness for her character. The writer who made the tale must have loved God well.

What men and women God trains in the wilderness! It would seem as if great destinies often had rough beginnings! 'I will make him a great nation,' said the angel of God. We must go down to go up. We must suffer if we would be *strong* with other than a rude, unmellowed power. Why, this is human history repeated in an individual example! Man's story had a rough opening. Adam in blighted Eden was as Ishmael in the inhospitable wilderness.

Hagar expected to die, and she never was so sure of life. Ishmael withered only at the top, not at the root, for out of that root was to spring a great nation. These surprises not only save life from monotony; they keep us, if rightly valued, lowly, expectant, dependent. *They operate in two contrary ways*—lifting up man, and casting him down.

¶ In the best of his books, Jack London tells us that the secret of White Fang's success in fighting other dogs was his power of surprise. 'When dogs fight there are usually preliminaries—snarlings and bristlings, and stiff-legged struttings. But White Fang omitted these. He gave no warning of his intention. He rushed in and snapped and slashed on the instant, without notice, before his foe could prepare to meet him. Thus he exhibited the value of surprise. A dog taken off its guard, its shoulder slashed open, or its ear ripped in ribbons before it knew what was happening, was a dog half whipped.' Here is the strategy of surprise in the wild. Has it nothing to teach me? I think it has. I remember going for a walk one evening in New Zealand, many years ago, with a minister whose name was at one time famous throughout the world. I was just beginning then, and was hungry for ideas. I shall never forget that, towards the close of our conversation, my companion stopped, looked me full in the face, and exclaimed with tremendous emphasis, 'Keep up your surprise-power, my dear fellow; the pulpit must never, never lose its power of startling people!' I have very often since recalled that memorable walk; and the farther I leave the episode across the years behind me the more the truth of that fine saying gains upon my heart.[3]

5. This early family history was meant to be full of significance for the Church of God. And it had to be made clear that in God's spiritual family circle, or within their eternal home, no place can be found for such as are His only after the flesh, bearing on their body, indeed, the seal of His covenant, yet not born again of His Holy Spirit. St. Paul's use of this ancient household is admitted by himself to be an allegorical use of it. Nevertheless it is an allegory which rests on a deep basis in the providential design of the story. It is no more in Paul's hands than the inspired working out of a hint which lay ready for the apostle in the teaching of his Lord. By his super-

[1] H. R. Hall, in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, v. 785.

[2] J. Laurence Rentoul, *At Vancouver's Well*, 12.

[3] F. W. Boreham, *Faces in the Fire*, 20..

natural conception and birth from parents who received power to give him being at all only through their faith in the promise of God, Isaac was of all men most fit to symbolize that spiritual seed who are born of God, and who display, in virtue of their heavenly birth, a faith like Abraham's. With such an origin his personal character corresponded. He not merely inherited his father's blood; he shared his father's piety. In him, therefore, was appropriately prefigured all the moral family of God, who in every age have walked in the steps of Abraham, and who are summed up in Isaac's antitype—Jesus Christ. No less conspicuously did the wayward boy who owed his birth to Sarah's wilful scheme and Abraham's weakness and Hagar's servitude typify, both by outward position and by spiritual character, all such as stand nominally inside the household of faith, yet have not been born of the Spirit into the free trust and love of sons, but serve God only under a bondman's constraint or with a bondman's fear.

Hagar's God is ours. He speaks to us as plainly as He spoke to Hagar. We have felt Him in the first crisis of our life as the All-seeing, and have obeyed His call to take up the duties of a steady life. Then many years pass by, and monotony lays its withering finger on our life. We need another shock—the shock of the afternoon of life—if we are to grow into something higher. And it comes, awakening us from the commonplace, stirring us to our centre. Cruel and bitter we think it, as we are driven into the desert, leaving behind us all the ancient loves and sorrows. We go forth, carrying with us our last hope, our last aspiration, the child of our whole life, desiring, at least, to save that from the tempest of sorrow. And the misery grows deeper, the thirst for our lost youth, our lost energy, our lost brightness. But we are stirred out of our slavery to earth's monotonous quiet, out of our dead satisfaction with this world—stirred to the very depths. At last it seems we can bear no more. The heaven is brass to our prayer; the water is spent in the bottle. We cast away our last hope and turn aside lest we see it die.

It is then that God makes Himself known as the Ever Near. He bids us take up the hope we have cast away, and embody it in a new life. 'Arise,' He cries in our heart, 'I am with you. Drink of this living water. I myself will be in you a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. You are free from the slavery of the visible and the world; all the freedom of heaven is before you, all the work of earth to be done, no longer for yourself, but for Me and for your fellow-men. You shall be twice the man you were; and I shall be with you, even to the end of the world.'

I looked at life with all-unseeing eyes,
Unable to discern the deeper thing
Or dive below the surface to the spring,
Until thou camest as a glad surprise.
And now to me the smallest bird that flies
Twitters a song which seraphim might sing;
While roadside flowers a sacred message bring,
And teach those truths that make the angels wise.
I cannot tell thee how thy passing touch
Had power the underlying thought to show
Till all the world was changed because of thee:
Nor do I care to measure overmuch
The why and wherefore: this one thing I know,
That I, who once was blind, now clearly see.[1]

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

The Children's Secret Place.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God.'—Ps 51[10].

1. The land of fairies belongs to the little children; so we are often told. But boys and girls who are of school age may enter it too.

[1] Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, *Verses Wise or Otherwise*, 162.

There are, however, certain conditions attached to entering; I shall speak of them later.

Oh, grown-ups cannot understand
And grown-ups never will,
How short's the way to fairy-land
Across the purple hill:
They smile: their smile is very bland,
Their eyes are wise and chill;
And yet at just a child's command—
The world's an Eden still.

2. Autumn is at the door. I wish I could walk with you along the banks of a river I know, where there are a great many birch trees. How splendid the colours are; they are even more wonderful than the colours of Spring. A company of boys walked along there the other day, and they seemed to see nothing out of the common; they wished, in fact, that the birch trees were hazel ones, and that the nuts upon them were ripe. They chased each other in and out among the birches, crushing the brackens and making a great noise. It made one feel sorry. But a girl was there alone one evening late in September, and she heard and saw things that made her cry out for very joy. All round her there seemed to be little fairy heralds. They did not blow upon trumpets and cry, 'Autumn is coming! Autumn is coming!'; but they hung gold upon the birch trees, and here and there they touched the brackens with colours so wonderful that under the trees it was as if a very gorgeous carpet had been laid. Fairies too ran about among the golden stooks which she saw through the trees, and there was beautiful fairy music. 'Dear little Robin Redbreast,' she cried, 'so you're among the fairies.'

Robin, Robin, Redbreast,
Oh, Robin dear!
Robin sings so sweetly
At the falling of the year.

3. I told you there were certain conditions attached to the entering of this fairy-land. Let me tell you a fairy story.

A long time ago a boy was punished by his schoolmaster and he ran away. He hid in a cave by the river and remained there without food for two days. Two little men came to him, and said, 'Follow us, and we will take you to the Land of Delight.' He followed them through a dark passage into the earth, and then out into a rich and beautiful country. They led the boy to their King, and the King made him the companion to his eldest son.

The King allowed him to go back to see his mother. One day the boy told her about the wonderful treasures of the King's palace, so she asked him to bring some of them to her.

One day when playing with the King's son the boy stole a golden ball and ran with it to his mother's house. But the two wee men pursued him and seized the golden ball and departed. He was then so very sorry that he had stolen the golden ball that he wanted to beg the King's pardon, but he found the passage closed. He never got in again.

That boy had not 'clean hands,' as the Bible expresses it.

Here is another. There was an old shepherd, and he played upon his flute so beautifully that a lovely fairy came and listened to him, and was so delighted that she asked him to go to her fairy palace with her. She put a ring upon his hand, and he immediately became a youth dressed in princely robes. He promised to live beside her and play to her always, but he said that he must first bid his friends in Rome farewell. The fairy fitted him out in grand style—so grand that every one was struck with his beauty. When he arrived at Rome the Queen of the country invited him to her palace. He made her believe that he was free to be her King, and could manage her kingdom for her. As soon as he spoke in this strain he turned into an old, ugly, and ragged shepherd. 'What is this horrible beggar doing here?' cried the Queen. 'Whip him out of the palace.' The miserable shepherd went back to his old country to find the fairy, but she never came to him again, and so he remained a shepherd. That shepherd was not straight: he had an evil heart.

4. You miss a great deal if you never get into the land of the fairies. I have heard of people who felt that the fairy-land of children was not far from God. Even when they had ceased to believe in fairies, they felt that it had been good for them to hear about the world round about them that busy people never see: it always made them think of better things.

What little girl does not love her doll? But the day will come when that doll will be sorrowfully laid aside. She will be glad that she had one, however. Perhaps it was but a broken old thing,

yet she loved it with her whole heart: that broken sawdust doll helped to teach her something of what loving a helpless creature means.

By and by you will be going out into the world, and I feel sure you will sometimes want to bring back the dreams that make you happy now. You may find that they won't come. But there is something better within reach. It is a secret place; but, like fairy-land, it is barred from those who are not straight, or have evil thoughts in their hearts. You may have already been trying to get into it; you have knocked and knocked and got no answer; it was like knocking at the door of an empty house. Your favourite apostle, Simon Peter, was once put into prison unjustly. It was a prison with bolts and bars, and a huge iron gate. When Peter saw that iron gate he gave up all hope of ever getting out; no one, he thought, could ever open it for him. While he waited for the worst to happen, he kept praying all the time; and suddenly there appeared at his side, not his jailer or an executioner, but an *angel*. How it all happened Peter could not have told; it was as if he saw a vision; his chains fell off, the prison doors opened, and the iron gate, that hopeless barrier—why, the angel was all the time by his side, and it just opened!

Peter went on to his friends. What do you think he found them doing? They were praying—praying for *him*. Peter then understood how the iron gate had opened. He had been praying, they had been praying, and they had prayed in earnest.

5. What would life be for boys and girls without God? One cannot bear the thought. But if we are to have His company as a friend—if we are to get into that 'secret place,' we must be straight, and keep our hearts free from evil thoughts—'clean,' as the text says. David found that very hard to do; he felt that he could not do it at all, so he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' God is willing to do that for you; He has said so; and I give you the words of the text as a little prayer which I hope you will remember to pray to-night:

'Create in me a clean heart, O God.'

II.

The Right Kind of Clothes.

'Be clothed with humility.'—1 P 5^5 (AV).

We have spoken about the right kind of hands, and feet, and eyes, and ears, and tongue, and memory, and heart. Now, after we have got all those right, what do you think we ought to see to next? Well, I think the next thing we should consider is how to get the right kind of clothes. Clothes are rather important things, aren't they? and none of us would like to wear the wrong kind. So will you turn to the First Epistle of Peter, the fifth chapter and the fifth verse, and there you will find your text—'Be clothed with humility.'

Now the word 'clothed' here has rather a curious meaning. The Greek word from which it is translated is used only in this place in the New Testament. It refers to the sort of overall or apron which the slaves wore, fastened round their waists with a girdle. They put it on over their other garments to keep them from being soiled. So the word was connected with the lowliest service of the lowliest people. I wonder why Peter used this word. I think it was because he wanted to tell the people to whom he was writing that they were to be ready to serve each other. They were not to be ashamed of the lowliest service if it would help somebody else. They were to put away all pride and haughtiness and make themselves of no account. And perhaps he was also thinking of the time when Jesus girded Himself with a towel to do slaves' work—to wash the disciples' feet.

Before Jesus came, humility was a much-despised virtue. At the time Jesus was born, the Romans were the great conquerors of the world and the Romans were the proudest people on earth. Humility meant to them something mean and servile. A haughty, overbearing spirit was what they admired. It was Jesus who glorified humility and gave it a new meaning. He came to earth to serve. He was born in a lowly manger, did lowly work, went in and out among lowly people, and died the lowliest and most shameful of deaths. And through all He was meek and lowly in heart, and taught His disciples that, as He had served them, so also they should serve one another.

Now there are two kinds of robes of humility. Some people mistake the one for the other, and I want to tell you about them both so that you may not fall into that error.

1. The first is the Robe of False Humility, and it is a very ugly and unbecoming sort of dress.

The Robe of False Humility is really just a very mean and shabby kind of pride. It pretends to be what it is not. Once there lived two rival philo-

sophers. One dressed in the ordinary way, but the other one wanted to show off his humility, so he went about in rags. And the philosopher who dressed like other people said of his rival that you could see his pride through the holes in his garments. Do you see what he meant? No humility is real humility that wants to make a parade of itself.

There are some people who go about the world pretending that they are worse than they are, or less clever than they are, in order to get others to praise them. These people are wearing the Robe of False Humility. They don't really mean what they say, and if you agreed with them they would be very angry and disappointed. Never wear the Robe of False Humility. It is sure not to suit you.

2. But the second dress is the Robe of True Humility, and it is the best dress anyone could wear. It suits everybody, and fits everybody, and it never goes out of fashion.

And what is true humility? Well, that is rather a difficult question to answer. But at any rate it isn't thinking and making the worst of ourselves. That is a silly thing to do, because God gives us our powers and He means us to make the very best of them. If you know that you can do a thing better than somebody else, it is stupid to pretend that you can't. But the best of us are very foolish, and none of us are very good, and there is no cause for any of us to be conceited about what we can do. To be humble is to have a true and modest opinion of ourselves and never to think anything that is good or right beneath us.

I want to give you three reasons why we should wear the Robe of True Humility.

1. The first reason is that *all our gifts come from God.* Sometimes you hear people chattering about their cleverness, or their wealth, or their fine relations. But they forget that they would have had none of these things if God hadn't given them to them. If we are cleverer than others we should remember that it is God who has made us so, and that He means us to use our brains for the good of other people. If we are better off than most it is God who gives us our riches, and we should be grateful to Him and try to use our money to help those who are less fortunate.

2. The second reason is that *if we want to be of any use in the world we must be humble.* If we go to people with proud hearts and disdainful looks we won't be able to help them.

Once there lived in Persia a good shepherd named Dara. He rose to be head man of his village, and he ruled so wisely and so well that the King made him chief governor over a large province of Persia. By and by strange stories were told of him. It was said that he took money from the people by unjust means and that he stored it in a huge chest which he always carried about with him wherever he went.

The story reached the ears of the King and he determined to find out if it were true, so he journeyed to the city where Dara lived. The governor with a troop of archers met the monarch at the gate of the city. Near by stood a camel bearing a huge chest. When the King saw the chest he was very angry and commanded that it should be opened immediately. His orders were quickly obeyed, and what do you think was found inside? Just an old, ragged shepherd's coat.

Dara's accusers looked very much ashamed, but the King demanded to know the meaning of the coat. Then the governor explained that this was the coat he had worn when he ruled over his native village. It had helped him to rule justly and kindly. He was afraid that he might become proud, and vain, and harsh, but when he looked at the coat it reminded him how poor and mean a man he had been, and it helped to keep him humble and kind.

The highest honour we can have in the world is just to be able to serve somebody else, but we shall never be able to do that unless we put on the Robe of True Humility.

3. Lastly, we should wear this dress because *it is to humble people that Jesus comes.* He cannot enter the dwelling of the proud, and if we want Him as our Friend we must put away all pride and conceit out of our hearts.

The late Principal John Cairns of Edinburgh was one of the humblest men that ever lived. All his life he preferred the lowly to the lofty, the work of a servant to that of a master. And when he lay dying, his last words were, 'You go first, I follow.'

'Me first' can never wear the Robe of True Humility. Those who wear it never really think about themselves at all, because they are so busy thinking about other people.

Point and Illustration.

The Christ we Forget.

Is it pedantry to demand the correct spelling of proper names? In the biography of a Scotsman, written by a Scotsman, which was published recently, the name of Andrew Thomson has a *p* thrust into the heart of it. We take up *The Christ we Forget*, a Life of our Lord for Men of To-day, written by Mr. P. Whitwell Wilson (Morgan & Scott; 6s. net), and on the first page we find 'John Richard Greene.' Is it weakness to be made at once suspicious of the book?

We have got over our suspicion. We have read the book, and lay it down, not without prejudice merely but with an admiration and thankfulness that no words we can use are able to express.

Who is Mr. P. Whitwell Wilson? Turn up the name in *Who's Who*: 'WILSON, PHILIP WHITWELL, Parliamentary Correspondent, Daily News; *b.* 1875; *s.* of I. Whitwell Wilson, J.P. of County of Westmoreland, and Annie, *d.* of Jonathan Bagster, Bible-publisher; *m.* 1899, Alice A., *o. d.* of Henry Collins, Pawtucket, R.I., U.S.A.; one *s.* and two *d.* *Educ.*: Kendal Grammar School; Clare Coll., Camb. President of the Camb. Union Society; editor of the Granta, Public School Magazine, 1897–99; M.P. (L.) South St. Pancras, 1906–10; contested Appleby Division, Westmoreland, 1910. *Address*: The Red Gable, Meadway, Hendon, N.W. *Club*: National Liberal.'

No book is named. This is evidently Mr. Wilson's first publication. And he is a layman. The Gospels have not been his professional study, yet he knows unerringly what the study of the Gospels has come to. He has not to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God, yet he makes every chapter a sermon of the most exquisite beauty and persuasiveness. His command of language—language that is simple without attracting attention to its simplicity, language that is hallowed and in harmony with its theme—his command of language, we say, is something. But it is only the instrument of his thought, thought that is disciplined surely by the daily practice of the presence of Christ. We shall quote a single paragraph.

'"*Many*" *and* "*Few*."—There were so many who saw Him and knew about Him; there were so few who followed Him—so many called, so few chosen. That was why He spoke so earnestly of the broad road, where every one walks, and the strait gate, which is so seldom discovered. Ten lepers were healed, as to-day tens of millions are blessed by the material benefits of the true faith; one only returned to the Redeemer Himself, as a grateful worshipper. Yet He did not desire a testimonial, or when first He cleansed a leper He did it, as it were, confidentially, and thought only of the man visiting the priest and regaining his place in society. It was not "the cause" that absorbed His affection. He was ever seeking the individual—taking a dumb man, as at Jericho, away by himself, or a blind man, as at Jerusalem; and, gradually, by symbols of His own devising, evoking love and faith from the isolated heart, until ear heard, eye saw, tongue spoke. Of His words, all of them divine, few have been reported and published. His aim was rather, and still is, to speak to people quietly, so that no one else can hear—to make Himself, not so much a public man, as a particular and intimate Friend, who sticketh closer than a brother, "nearer than hands and feet."'

The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. JAMES MOFFATT, D.D., D.LITT., HON. M.A.(OXON.), GLASGOW.

II.

OUR modern symbolism of the priestly function does no sort of justice to the ancient view. When Matthew Arnold says of Wordsworth—

> 'He was a priest to us all
> Of the wonder and bloom of the world,
> Which we saw with his eyes, and were glad,'

we understand that 'priest' means interpreter, one who introduces us to some deeper vision, one who opens up to us, as we say, a new world of ideas. To the author of Hebrews, such was not the ultimate function of Christ as high priest. Dogmatic theology would call this the prophetic