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2 Kings iv. 26.

A SIDE-LIGHT FROM EAST AFRICA.

SOME readers have probably felt surprise in reading this verse. Although the Shunammite woman has lost her son by death, when Elisha asks her if it is well with her husband and child, she replies, 'Well.' It seems to our Western minds not quite true. The woman goes on afterwards to tell Elisha her trouble without any sort of explanation of her previous apparently contrary statement. The explanation is that she was simply following Eastern custom, and in East Africa to-day we can find almost exact parallels. A Swahili-speaking African even now greets another by saying *Jambo*, which, amongst other things, means 'trouble,' and the greeting is a contraction for 'Have you any trouble?' The answer to the greeting is

Sijambo, which means 'no trouble.' This answer is invariably given as a matter of course and is not intended as a statement of fact, but only as a greeting. After the greeting the person concerned may get to business and tell any amount of troubles. Another question of like nature often asked on meeting a person is *Habari zako*, which means literally 'thy news,' but practically 'What is your news?' Again the answer, whatever the news may be, is an invariable one, namely, *njema*, which means 'good.' This, like the above, is not meant literally, but merely as a greeting, after which the real news may be told. It will be evident how closely this resembles the case of the Shunammite woman. Her first reply (*shalom*) was merely a matter of customary courtesy, and was not intended as a statement of fact.

HENRY HOLLOWAY.

S. Magnus, Lerwick.

Entre Nous.

SOME TOPICS.

What it is that saves.

'FORTHWITH, I doubt not, there arises this question in your minds: What place, then, in particular, has the death of Jesus in this whole soul of Him that saves, this whole career of His that restores us to God? It has the central place. It does not stand alone, but it has the central place. All else in His saving life, His saving resurrection, His saving presence with us here to-night, is congregated about His death. It is Jesus Himself who saves, all that He was, and became, and is; but this Jesus that saves comes from the Cross to do it. *It is Jesus that died who saves.* This may seem to contradict what I said a little ago; but it is not so. It was not the death of Jesus that saved Peter; but it was the Jesus, that all the time, even in Galilee, was what His death completed and sealed, who saved Peter. It was not the death of Jesus that saved Stephen; but it was the Jesus that died and still bore the signs of His martyrdom in the invisible realm, who saved Stephen. It is not the death of Jesus, an isolated event in the career of Jesus, that saves you and me. It is the Jesus that died, who saves us.'¹

¹ A. Boyd Scott, *Nevertheless we Believe*, 63.

Spiritualism.

'There are people about us, who, if we may trust their assertions, should be able to help us. They are the people called Spiritualists. They certainly declare to us that they can and do communicate with those who live beyond the veil. Surely this is hopeful! In reality it proves hopeless. So far as we can hear, no priest or prophet among them all has got into touch with the living Christ. They share our disappointment. They try to explain the silence. They affirm that the more developed and purified a spirit is, the farther removed it is from this earthly life and intercourse with this material world. Jesus Christ is too exalted to communicate. Other spirits, in their communications, do sometimes give us news of Him. But, according to these, Christ is removed and remote, as I have described, while others among the spirits declare that they are no nearer Him there than they were on earth. This is, to say the least of it, very disconcerting and disappointing. It is so disconcerting that, even on this point apart from others, I grow more than sceptical of the whole cult of Spiritualism. As a believer in the living Christ, I have a right to demand that they shall put me into communication with Him. For, do

they not tell me that, in the unseen while the lower spirits cannot ascend at will, the higher spirits can descend as they choose? But if that be so, must not even the exalted Christ descend to my longing? In a séance, as my Spiritualist friends assure me, I open a door into the very realm of the blessed departed. If it be so, how dare Christ refuse to descend and reveal Himself to me? If He refuse, as He does, then He is no more the lover of weak and aspiring souls He was in the days of His flesh: can I think this possible? That is the one alternative. The only other alternative is this, that the living Christ in the unseen simply repels and declines the practices of these necromancers. For myself I feel shut up to accept this second alternative. I am impressed with the fact that Christ, who in Galilee dealt gently with superstition, and even responded to the magically minded, who this very night in remote Italian villages responds to the superstitious, will make no response whatever to the people called Spiritualists.¹

'Be a Steamer.'

Twenty-four talks to Boy Scouts by Headmasters and men who thoroughly understand boys have been published with the title *How to Make the Most of Life* (Allenson; 2s. 6d. net).

One of the talks is by the Rev. E. W. Sheppard-Walwyn. It is on 'The Three Boats.' 'Don't be a barge,' he says to the Scouts, 'for it is quite the flattest kind of thing to be—just to let yourself be pulled any way any thing likes to pull you, and to have no power inside that keeps you going in one fixed direction.'

'And don't be a sailing vessel, though it is better than a barge, as it can get along without being towed. But it depends upon the wind and currents being favourable.'

What is the Boy Scout to be, then? 'Be a steamer,' says Mr. Sheppard-Walwyn. 'That's the thing! I expect you have been in one, and have seen how the bow slaps the waves on their wet faces, and how the vessel forges along in the teeth of opposing winds and currents. The steamer has a power within.'

'God can give something to you which will turn you into a steamer, so that you will be able to go along straight on the right way, and not care a little bit what the others do or say to you.'

¹ A. Boyd Scott, *Nevertheless we Believe*, 80.

The Letters of St. Paul.

'Thus these glowing Epistles become a fitting climax to what has preceded them. As it was the purpose of Paul's earlier letters to liberalize the Christian faith, and of the second group to spiritualize it, and of the more formal Epistle to the Romans to systematize it, so in the meditations and revelations of Paul's last phase he is absorbed in the idealizing of history, the lifting of its prose into poetry, the setting of its facts within a cosmic plan. The first intention of Paul was to rescue the new faith from Palestinian asphyxiation and to give it a chance to breathe in the free air of a Greek world; his second aim was the emancipation of that faith from ceremonial and ritual and to secure for it the authority of the spirit; his third desire was to justify that faith by logical reasoning and to rationalize the convictions which he has attained. Finally, he ascends from these plains of debate and demonstration into the serener air of contemplation and vision, as the first disciples went up with their Master on the Mount of Transfiguration, and saw there a glory which was invisible below.'²

St. Paul in Art.

'It is suggestive to recall the fact that in the comprehensive Calendar of Saints approved by ecclesiastical authorities, from St. Joseph the father of Jesus, to the last subject of canonization, the Apostle Paul has held a very minor place. The most conspicuous convert to the new faith, its hero, preacher and martyr, beyond all comparison the most effective agent in its propagation, Paul is rarely one of the figures which Christian art has loved to commemorate, or before whose shrine the faithful have loved to bend. He is seldom portrayed except as the companion of Peter, and while the chief apostle holds the keys, Paul is to be recognized by the less sacred symbol of the sword. "Is there," asks Mrs. Jameson, "among the thousand representations of the Apostle Paul, one on which the imagination can rest completely satisfied? I know not one."³

NEW POETRY.

N. Marshall Ford.

The Bridge of Flowers, by Mr. N. Marshall Ford (Erskine Macdonald), is a rather irritating book.

² F. G. Peabody, *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World*, 119.

³ *Ibid.* 7.

Many of the poems show very good work, but many are marred—one might almost say ruined—by too great straining of images and of language. We do not refer to the occasional liberties the author takes with English grammar, as in :

He, as of old, still offereth might,
Mountains to move to they who trust,

but to such verses as that which opens the volume :

Earth fell from far,
A bud of sombre flame.
A wandering star
From nests of stars she came.
Shook the great trees
By Life's far river fed ;
Their mystic fruits
And gulfs were peopled.

We do not say that this verse is meaningless, but we *do* say that it is needlessly obscure, and a succession of such verses becomes tedious. Fortunately not all the poems lie open to this objection, and we quote the two verses of

THE MASTER.

Deep in His eyes
Lay knowledge of the earth and skies
Master of all the mysteries
Of seed and bloom,
Of sun and tide,
Of beauty, wide as earth is wide.
He veiled—to teach us sacrifice.

Who fathoms evil? Who can say
That Nature loves to rend and slay.
Fights she the forces day by day
Which ambush
This dim way of ours?
Sees she, when serpents crouch in flowers
Lion and lamb together play.

Bessie W. Rumsby.

Though there are here and there hints of drab city streets with their hustle and noisy traffic in the little collection of poems by Bessie W. Rumsby, *In the Street* (Edgar & Skinner ; 1s. 6d. net), much more in evidence are the fragrant scent of gardens and of country lanes and meadows, the glint of daffodils on mossy banks, and the perfume of violets and of wallflower.

Mrs. Rumsby is the wife of the Rev. F. W. Rumsby, Minister of Kent Street Baptist Church, Portsea, Portsmouth, who in a foreword explains that the poems are reprinted from their Church Magazine and other periodicals in response to urgent requests from all quarters to do so.

'HE GIVETH UNTO HIS BELOVED IN THEIR SLEEP.'
—Ps. cxxvii. 2 (R.V.).

I dreamed of roses all the night,
Then waking, faced the toilsome day—
But oh, the perfume of my dream
Trailed with me all along the way !
E'en so He gives us in our sleep
Not only rest, but visions bright ;
And wond'rous melodies He weaves
Amid the silences of night !

And best of all He takes us back
To childhood's haunts, and lets us stray
Thro' early Beulah-lands, and view
The Heaven that is not far away !

The doubter looks again to God—
The wavering readjustment find ;
Because in dreams we live again
The child-white days we left behind !

These 'treasures of the darkness' span
The present with its want and fear,
And hold us to our earliest faith,
That God, and Heaven, are always near !

Hope Fairfax Taylor.

Hope Fairfax Taylor is the author of *Songs for Disciples* (Blackwell ; 2s. net). The poems, which are not all religious (as the title might suggest), are simple lyrical pieces for the main part. At times the verse becomes rather prosy—witness the following passage taken almost at random from 'Our Village':

Is it only a vision the poet
Never may live to see
Fulfilled? A dream in the heart of God
Unwrought in reality?

We quote one of a series of three sonnets, 'In Memory E. F. T.', entitled

NEW FOUND.

Beloved, when thou wentest first, alone,
Whither I might not follow as I knew,
Over the high pass, where the stars are few
And stones are many and the road unknown,
I could not pray—thou seemed'st no more mine own
But God's. I could not sing—no sweet accord
In answer sang, no more might share the stored
Delight of life—thou hadst my thoughts outgrown.
But now I commune with thee in the courts
Of song and silence 'neath the open sky ;
We meet in happier mansions and my thoughts
Wing with thine own and purer heights descrie ;
My narrow prayer unfolds to greet the Sun,
I see the splendour of the Three in One.

Printed by MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED, Tanfield Works,
and Published by T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street,
Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary com-
munications be addressed to THE EDITOR, Kings
Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.