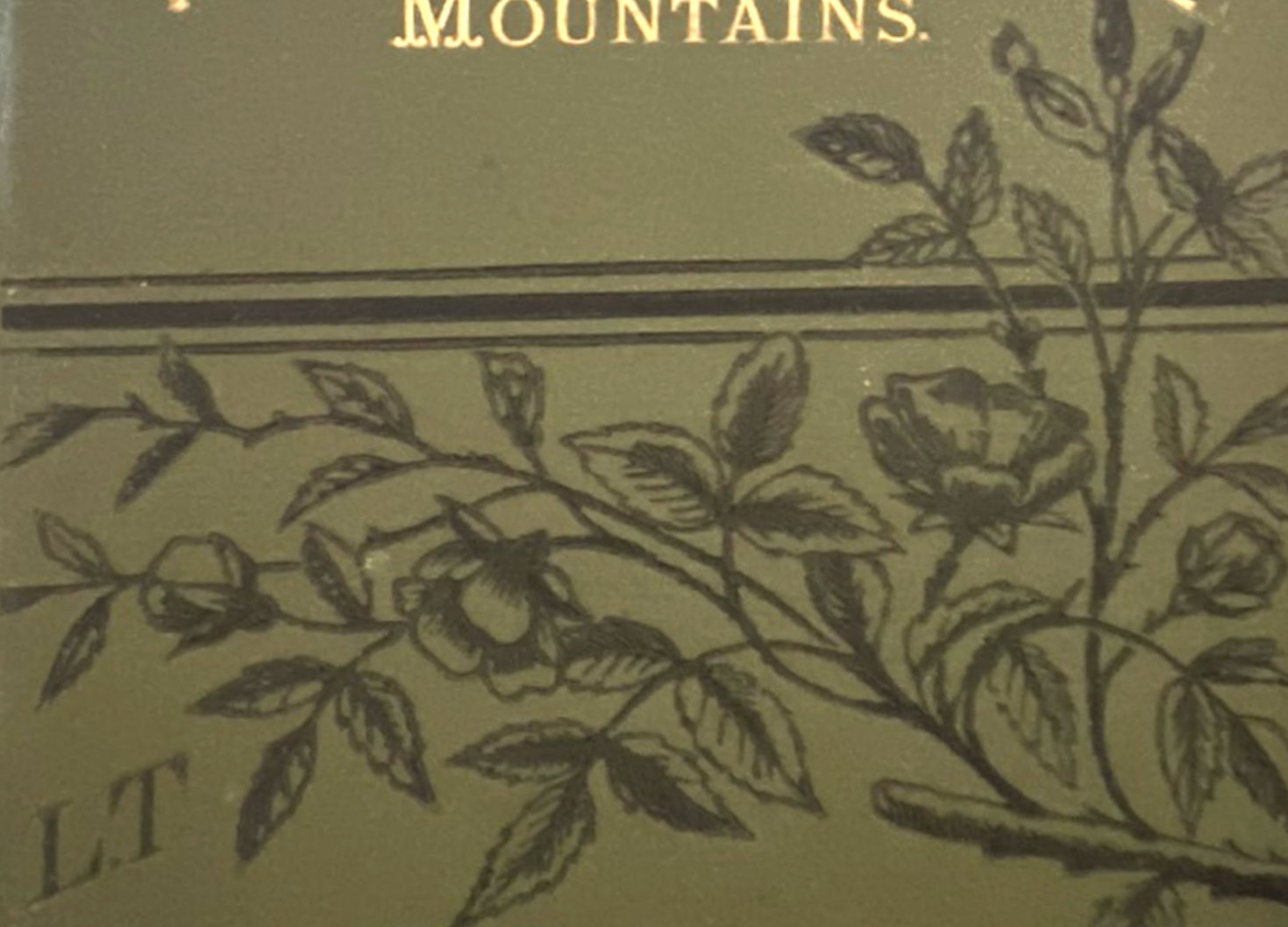
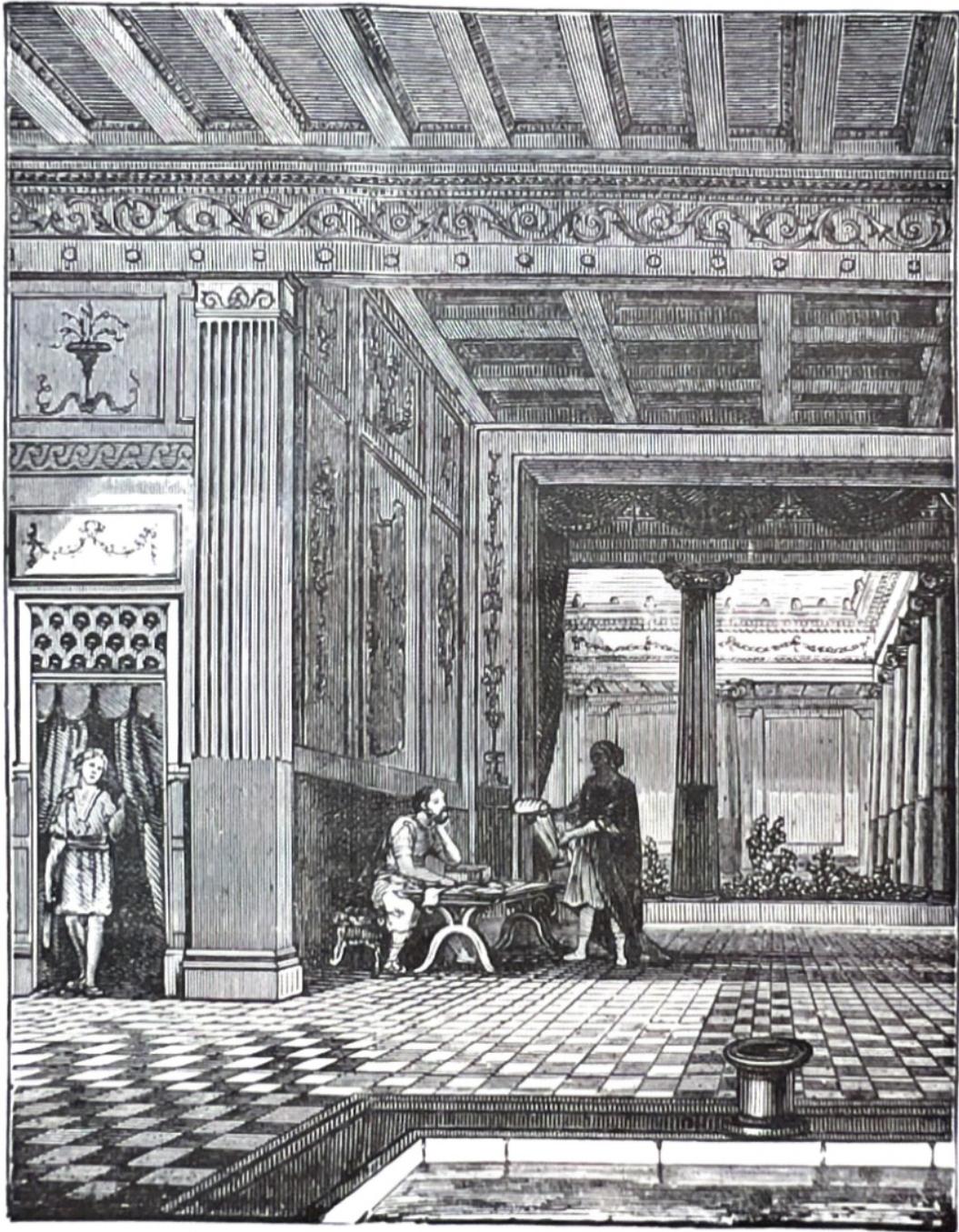


HALF-HOURS AMONG  
THE  
MOUNTAINS.



LT

HALF-HOURS AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.



*Frontispiece—A House in Pompeii.*



# Half-Hours

## Among the Mountains.

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BY L. T.

*Author of "Rays of Starlight" & "Half-hours by the Sea."*

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THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,  
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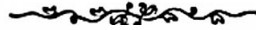
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# HALF-HOURS AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.



## CHAPTER I.

“Two voices are there, one is of the sea,  
One of the mountains; each a mighty voice.”

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“The end of all flesh is come before me.”—*Genesis vi. 13.*



WE listened to the mighty voice of the sea, for many a pleasant half-hour the last time that we were together; and now I give my young friends the same invitation that was once given to me. “Come with me to my home under the shadow of the mountains, and I will shew you such magnificence as your England can never give; such



skies and such rivers as you never dreamed of before." I hope my friends will feel as I did then, that such an offer was too good to refuse.

And though there is, more often than not, some real hard work to do when we set off to spend any time among the mountains, and very little of that lazy, dreamy doing of nothing that some people are so fond of in their holidays; yet the sweetest rest is that earned by hard work; and the splendid view from the top of a mountain, and the bracing clear air that seems to give us something of its own fresh vigour and strength, more than make up for the toil that it cost us to get there.

But some of us never seem to realise what a very tiny spot in the world that particular place is in which we live, until we have had a few mountain glimpses, and seen for ourselves a little of what lies hidden beyond these grand heights that shut us in. To our wondering eyes there often open, for the first time, views of the grandeur and goodness of the One who has not only given the sea a decree that it cannot pass over, but has also set fast the mountains, and limited the everlasting hills.

You all know something of the pleasure of climbing hills, if you have not yet attempted the

mountains—hills on a larger scale as we may call them. Though when we think of some of them we have to own, that they are almost infinitely larger.

I think some of you will remember how fond Ernest was, a little while ago, of climbing the only hill he had ever then seen. Now he has climbed other and larger ones, and I hope many of you will not be tired until you have come with me to the very end of our mountaineering expedition. As a rule, I suppose it is better not to attempt the higher peaks of a mountain range until you have practised for a few times on some of the lesser ones. But as in this journey I am not going to lead any of you into dangerous ascents, I do not think it will matter. And I want to do the same as many of you would do in beginning your lessons, that is to take one of the hardest first.

I can now see a look of quick intelligence on many of your faces as you all think of a particular mountain, and imagine yourself getting ready to climb it; and before I ask Ernest I am almost certain of the one of which he is thinking, as the hardest one to mount.

Ah! I thought so. Vesuvius—says Ernie,

triumphantly, without an idea of being wrong. As it happens to be the one that he knows most about I am not at all surprised at his answer, but we must see what some one else will say before you guess the right one, for Ernie is a long way from it. What is Elsie saying now, Mount Everest? No, wrong again, though both she and Ernest will have their turn, with their own particular climb, before we all separate and go our own way.

But as I see you are all eager to know now, I had better tell you at once, that we are going to begin with the first range of mountains that is mentioned in the oldest writings in the world. Ah! now the secret is out, for Mary's face shews that she has found it at last, and as she says, "Mount Ararat" I can almost imagine I see a look of disappointment creeping over some of your faces.

Do you imagine it will be *all* hard work there, and no pleasure? so you shrug your shoulders, as if you already felt the everlasting snows, that cap the summit with their gleaming whiteness, falling around you. If I wanted only to give you a few hours' amusement or adventure, I certainly should

not begin with our snow-capped peak ; but I think some of you may find that there is a very real and lasting kind of pleasure to be had with the work of getting there, if only we will *take* the trouble. I know I found as much or more real pleasure from a journey to Ararat than from any other mountains in the world ; excepting two or three, which we shall come to presently.

I once read of a lady, who travelled through some of the loveliest Alpine scenery, leaning back in her mountain carriage, saying it was “too beautiful to look at.” Now she was certainly one of those who would get no good from the beauties around her, and would never be able to tell any one else about them.

But there are people who are fond of saying, “Oh ! it is not worth the trouble.” Now I hope if any of these are starting to climb with us, they will understand that all they have to do is just to obey orders ; and take all the precious things that will be offered them on “the mountain of Ararat.”

For I think some of you know, that where I want to journey through with you now, is not exactly the one special peak known in our days by that name, but the region round about it. The

fertile, pleasant country where the river Aras winds softly through the fields and ripples over the stones.

You all know, I am sure, what happened here ages and ages ago. One of the first pictures I can remember looking at as a child was where the rain was pouring down from above, and huge waves were dashing up from below, to the top of high hills ; and forest trees, where mothers and fathers were trying to lift up their little children to a place of safety, out of the reach of the dreadful waters, that grew higher and higher every moment. But it was all of no use, they could not save them, the waters covered everything.

One large strange-looking boat floated safely on these waters ; and when every despairing mother had sunk in the cold waves with her children, when not even their fathers could find a place of safety, still the strange great vessel floated on, and on, safely and quietly above the drowned world—the world that would not be saved, though for over a hundred years they had been warned of their danger.

Day after day, and week after week passed away, and still the Ark floated silently over the

cities and villages, it may be, where spite of all God's love and goodness in sending them the glorious sunshine to ripen their golden corn, and turn their bunches of green, sour grapes into the luscious purple clusters that were so great a part of their food—spite of all His goodness—not a voice sent up a word of thanksgiving, or even owned that it was from God they received all the blessings. Not a heart had owned Him ; or had they done so, they would have entered into the refuge God had openly provided.

Well! the weeks ordered for the voyage of the ark were over, the dove had carried the olive leaf to the anxious watchers in the ark, and now, instead of its slowly floating on, over the surface of the world of waters, it rests upon something that is solid ground at last ; it rested upon the mountain of Ararat.

Those eight people who had gone *into* the ark, left behind them people perhaps shopping, or gardening, or going to be married, eating their dinner and drinking their wine ; a busy, laughing, gay world, came *out* of the ark to find an empty world. All the sin and sorrow that had lain hidden beneath the gaiety was gone. All the people were

gone, all the houses were gone, and it was a new world to Noah and his family which opened to them from these heights of Ararat.

Where was it, does Frank say, at the garden of Eden again ?

No. Ararat, as we know it now, lies about the middle of a hilly country called Armenia, and strangely enough it belongs to three countries, or bounds them at that one point, Turkey, Russia, and Persia—though, I believe, the Russians claim it now. You will find it in your maps of Asia Minor.

As I tell you a little of what some travellers have said about this great mountain, I want you to remember what I said, that it is not easy work always to come among the mountains, but if you are willing to glean, you shall have some corn ; that is, if you will pay attention, and still more if you will *believe*, you will get all the good for your own.

But I see some of you look tired, so we will rest a little, and I will tell you of the difficulties we should meet with if we were taking this journey on foot, instead of in our minds.

A Russian officer, and some of his friends, were



MOUNT ARARAT.





very eager to get to the top of Mount Ararat, and with their servants and horses they started from the plain below. If you look at the picture you will see that the snow forms a line at a certain part of the mountain, and above this it is covered with snow all the year round. Some years the winters are more severe than others, and then the snow is lower down.

Now when this officer and his Cossack soldiers began their work of ascent, the snow line was lower than usual, and, of course, that made it more difficult for them. We must not think of a few inches of snow on a smooth surface, like our hills in England in winter, for the sides of Ararat are very steep and very rough. And before the horses had gone far in the snow it became so difficult that the poor things could not keep their footing.

I once saw some horses going up a hill, so steep and high that it seemed as if they must topple over upon the loads they were dragging up; and here the Russian officer found, after seeing the poor horses slipping and struggling up the steep sides, that he must send them all back, and try to get on with only the soldiers.

As he wanted to stay on the mountain to make scientific observations, they had to carry up a good many things, such as food, and coal for a fire, and a tent, and the instruments they would need too. So there was really some hard pulling as well as hard climbing.

Russian soldiers are, however, cheerful and willing fellows with an officer who is kind to them, and when they saw their colonel helping in all the work, they began to pull up the sledges, shouting and cheering one another along. When night came on they began to form their camp as well as they could in the midst of the rocky, snowy ground, and with a storm of thunder and lightning, the darkness passed at last, and very early next day they plodded on again.

But the storm grew wilder, and the cold half-froze the poor Cossacks; the snow whirled so fiercely in their faces that they were almost blinded, and at last nearly all the things were taken off the sledges and left behind, except the instruments they must have. So half the men were sent back, and were to wait for their master lower down.

Then, after some hours' climbing, he and those who stayed with him having found a little shelf of

more level ground, where they could lie down without rolling down the steep, prepared to pass the night as best they could. But here they had only a wrap or two to keep off the snow, and as a terrible storm again arose they were obliged to try and get to a better place as soon as the day broke and gave them light.

After a struggle that strained every nerve, against the wind, and snow, and hail that beat upon them, they reached the place where there was space enough to put up their tents; but they found it very hard work to get them safely up. From there they watched, and waited till the storm was over, two days later. Then they went on and soon reached the summit, or rather one of them, for they found there were several peaks, some so steep as to be almost perpendicular. But the observations were taken, the knowledge needed was gained, and they felt well repaid for all their toil; and though the descent was not without its danger, it was over at last. Very thankful were both the master and men when their camp at the lower slope of the mount was reached, where a fire could safely be made and the almost frozen men could regain their natural warmth.

But what *use* was their going, after all? Is that what our practical friend Alice says? I am afraid you would not understand all the reasons that scientific men give, but one is, that by means of the knowledge gained by comparing the observations made on the different mountains of the globe, it is hoped that the, as yet, unknown laws that rule the currents that are always passing round our earth, may be discovered. And if you would like to have a proof of the use of such knowledge, you will at once see one, when you remember that the storm signals, or warnings, that are sent to all the coastguard stations, so that vessels and sailors may be prepared for a storm, are the result of constant and toilsome observations of the currents of air. By means of these warnings, many lives have been saved from danger or death; that is one great result; and there are others that you will learn as you grow older.

Now I want you all to think a little of what the voice of these mountains would say to each one of us. Why have they a special interest for us?

Because it was in some of these hollows, or on one of these ridges, that the ark at last rested.

And what does that tell us?

It tells me that God had said, as the sin that filled the whole world came up before Him "The *end* of all flesh is come before me," and when God said that, and men, and women, and children too, were proved to have no *thought* except of evil, then all save those eight who obeyed His command, and took refuge in the ark, were swept away in the awful deluge. Their end had come.

And now, as it were, God begins a new race of men. Noah is not the head of it this time. He very soon shewed after leaving the ark, that the flood had not washed away sin, for it was still in his heart, and in the hearts of his family. But God was going to have One who could not sin, as the leader, or chief of a new family; and why I take you to Ararat is that you may find out, each for yourselves, whether you belong to it or not.

If you turn with me to a verse in Colossians, you will see what I mean. Who has a Testament? Lucy and Mary both take theirs from their pockets, which I am glad to see. It often tells who is a soldier or not.

One day I was travelling with some friends, and a text was spoken of that made me get out my little Bible. A gentleman saw me do so, and

said, "Ah! I see you carry a *pocket pistol*." A soldier on duty should never lay down his arms, and if we are Christ's soldiers we are never *off* duty here.

Well! look now at chapter i. 18, where after Paul had given a glorious description of his Master in the verses before, he says that He "is the BEGINNING."

Some of you I know have really started to follow Christ, you have believed on Him, and you know your sins are all forgiven. But when you find how many sinful ways, and thoughts, and words, weave themselves into the warp and weft of your life, into every day of it, you often get discouraged, do you not? I know you do, for our hearts are just alike, you know.

Well! will you remember that the *end* of all the sin in your heart has already come before God; He saw it all, condemned it all, and Christ put it all away. And if you are trusting in Christ at all, God sees you as *in Him*; one of the new race of which He is "the Beginning." Say it to yourselves over and over again, "the *end* of all I am has come before God, and I am in the One He has given as Lord and Saviour."

When you feel most keenly the horror of such an evil heart as yours and mine, then remember that though it is in us, and will be to the end, yet we are not to be miserable on account of it, but to believe what God says about it. Just look at this chapter of Colossians again. Look at verse 13, there we are saved from darkness—and there is no such darkness as our sin—and we are in the kingdom of His dear Son.

Owning that this is true, never forgetting that God has not passed over sin, but utterly condemned it, and inflicted the full penalty or punishment for it, only upon Another instead of ourselves, owning all this, let us rejoice in the voice from Ararat that tells us of the end of all we are in ourselves, and gives us a glimpse of a new life too. For the ark was a place of safety to Noah, and tells us of a greater Refuge to be brought forward at the right moment. And of a new life in a new world, as it were, as Noah found it when he and his family first stepped upon the earth that had been lying for days and weeks under the waters of the flood.

In a far deeper way, you and I, if we are trusting in God's Son, have begun a new life. You may



be like a little baby, and know scarcely anything about the place you are in, but if you *want* to learn about it, you *will* learn. You may know and have all you really desire to get, because you will not wish for it in a lazy kind of way, but you will make an effort for it. You will study His word—it is all there. But you will need to pray over it as well, for you will often come to a verse that perhaps you can make nothing of—*then ask*.

There is a verse in the Psalms that I am very fond of, it is this, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” Now if David needed to say this, how much more shall we, now that there is all the wondrous story of Christ’s life and death, and His present care over us, to study and learn. I think, perhaps, if Bibles and Testaments were not so plentiful we should value them more.

Let us have a peep from another mountain top, and see how the precious word of God was valued many long centuries ago.

We must take a long journey, even to northern Italy, and there about thirty miles from Turin, we may find a grand “mountain portal” that opens to us the way into those valleys and heights, where

the brave Waldensians kept that word in their hearts, and homes ; often at the risk of their lives, and in more than one case even at the loss of their lives.

From these Alpine heights and valleys, even in the dark days six and seven centuries past, came forth from time to time, copies of the Gospels, of the Epistles, of the Psalms, and other parts of the word they valued literally above their lives.

Mary is quite right as she reminds us that these books were not printed then.

No, there was no such thing in those far-off days as going into a fine, large shop, filled with beautifully-bound books of every kind and size. No such thing in the world as asking the bookseller to shew you some Bibles, and then having a dozen or so put before you, all clearly printed, and not too large to go into your pocket. And after you look at them all, you find one that you think will suit you, and giving a few shillings, or perhaps less than a shilling, you carry off the Bible for your own, having bought and paid for it with only this little trouble.

No, in those days every word was written by hand with pen and ink. And so it came about

that in the beautiful Waldensian valleys, many a boy copied slowly and carefully a part of the Bible.

Their teachers were called Barbes, and the Bible was their text book. The pupils often followed them in their lives of toil, in preaching, and reading to the dwellers in their Alpine homes. But before they were allowed to help others in public, these young men were expected to learn by heart, and repeat to the Barbes, one or more of the Gospels and Epistles. Some knew great part of the New Testament by heart.

All those who, as boys, had learned for their own souls the blessed truths of redemption, and wished to spend their lives in spreading the knowledge of the Bible, were expected to write one book of the Gospels at least, and some of the Epistles. More often several were written, and though great care and a good deal of time was spent upon the writing being clear and easily read, we may imagine that the binding would be plain, and often coarse and rough.

Little mattered it to these earnest men and women, of the Piedmontese Alps, what sort of covering was given to the priceless jewel of God's

word. And they left it to their fierce persecutors from Rome to cover the *outside* of their Vulgate, or Latin Bible, with rubies, and gold and pearls, while they fought against the followers of Jesus, of whom that Bible spoke.

But whilst many copies of the Vulgate were seen blazing with gems, their owners were seeking to light the fires that often became the martyr's stake, to those who sought to tell their fellow men and women that God pardoned, and justified, every soul who trusted in His Son.

It mattered not. Life was only prized by many of the Waldenses because in it they could tell of the Lord who had died for them—of the God whose love drew them to believe on Christ. And so, year after year, we might have seen the young missionaries coming down from their Alpine homes in the disguise of troubadours or minstrels, and venturing into far-off lands to make the glad tidings known.

Very strange and sweetly-sad songs they would sing to those who would listen, of love stronger than death, or sin; of pardon and pity for all; of grace now and glory to follow; of a God all

love and light ; instead of a God of judgment and wrath, as their priests would fain make them believe. Of a Saviour, the one Mediator, in the place of Mary and all the saints.

And souls did listen and did believe ; so there were a few here and there, far from their own beloved valleys, who gladly took the gift of eternal life that the young singers came such a long way to tell them of.

Then others came down from the mountains of the Waldensian territory disguised as pedlars. They had with them treasures of costly silk and lace, and jewels of gold and precious stones, and so they gained an easy entrance at times to the baron's castle, and when they had shewn, and perhaps sold, some of their silks and jewels to the ladies in the castle hall, then they would often, if able to do so, speak of the brighter jewels of forgiveness and joy ; of the robe that the Father gives to the prodigal ; of God in His grace and love.

More than once or twice would the pedlar bring out the treasured Gospel, written by his own hand, and give it to those who had never yet seen the word of God, and who in those

days often died because they were found in possession of it.

Little it stopped others from following them, that these noble men who travelled through the countries round their own Alps often marked their way by the blazing stake where they gave up their lives for the truth. Their ashes seemed to light up a fire in the heart of many another disciple; and year after year, in those two dark centuries, saw them following one another as witnesses for their Master, and then sealing the testimony of their lives by a martyr's death.

Ah! do you wonder, that "the word of God was precious in those days"? Do you wonder that I say we should value it more if we had fewer Bibles, perhaps? Not that it is anything else than a great blessing that there are so many, but oh! how the story of these olden times makes us long for something of the same fervour and love as then.

But then, I suppose, the danger of even having a Gospel in one's house made it more precious. We always value a thing more when we are in great danger of losing it. And now, though the church of Rome does not own that she has altered

one whit since she burnt people for reading it, still none dare, in our day, to prevent our having our Bibles openly. As you remember the voice from Ararat and from the valleys and mountains of Piedmont, will you not each pray that we may all value the priceless word of God more at its real value than we have ever done before ?



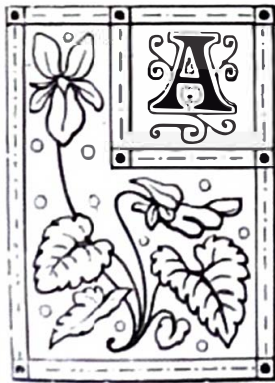


## CHAPTER II.

### THE CROSS REJECTED, THE CRESCENT INFLICTED.

“One of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”—

*Genesis xxii. 2.*



AS we can arrange *our* mountain rambles to suit our own tastes and powers, in a way that a great many cannot do, we will not take a snow-capped peak to-day, but explore a less difficult height. ●ne that seems nearer home than the “Koh-i-Núh,” as the Persians call our lordly Ararat.

I forgot to tell you when we were on it, that Ararat is a volcanic mountain. I know Ernest is fond of hearing about volcanoes, and now he can



add this to his list. For it is not many years since, that an earthquake caused the fall of an avalanche of huge stones and earth, from the side of one of the lesser slopes ; and as masses of fiery red smoke, smelling strongly of sulphur, were seen directly after, it seems clear that, though seldom active, the volcanic fires are not quite extinct.

For miles round the foot of the mountain vast beds of lava, and ashes, prove that Ararat and Vesuvius are relatives with fiery tempers, and like other hot tempers they often do mischief. There are many people still living who can remember the terrible year to those who had friends in the village and monastery, that up to 1840 had flourished happily at the base of the mountain.

When the smoke and vapour, and thick clouds of dust rolled slowly away, the many anxious friends, who crowded to the spot, saw nothing but a vast tract of huge rocks and stones, under which the rich hamlet of Arguri, with its cheerful people, was entirely buried. Thus it is not always safe to conclude that, because a volcano has been quiet for many years, it will always remain so.

But now I want to get our special climb for to-

day, and instead of the stormy clouds of Armenia, we will have the deep blue skies above the mountains of the "land of Moriah." I think most of you will remember at once the tale that first makes us acquainted with "Mount Moriah," as it is called a little later on in the same book, where mountains are so often spoken of, and where so many grand scenes are inseparably linked up with their different names.

Now let us take our stand on one of the many peaks in this "land" mentioned here. The air is so clear that our sight penetrates much farther than in our own northern home ; and we may see from our high post the whole country spread out beneath us.

To the south we may see the dark waters of that strange sea rolling over the guilty cities for which Abraham had pleaded, and which would have been spared if only ten righteous men had been found there. But nothing could save them, and after the fire and sulphur had done their work of destruction, the waters rushed in and hid the very ruins of the Cities of the Plain. And now the wandering Arabs who guide the traveller to the Dead Sea, will tell him that far

down below the surface houses and traces of other buildings may still be seen. But we have no need of this tradition. We know that the cities were overthrown, that the waves cover their sites, and even the pure waters of the Jordan that flow into the Dead Sea, are corrupted by the influence of its waters, for several miles from its mouth.

The waters of this sea are as horrible to the taste as can well be imagined. Even to bathe in it makes the skin burn and smart as if before a roaring fire, and causes such irritation of the eyes that the effects are felt for days by some who venture to bathe in it.

Though, as the waters are so buoyant, it is not the easiest task in the world to take a bath there. It would seem to be impossible to sink, as the bathers float like corks, and one could lie on one's back in the water and read with ease, but they would find their bodies encrusted with salt if they were not very quick in drying it after leaving the water. Wonderful as used to be the tales that were told of this sea, they are not so wonderful as the truth regarding it. We have only to think of its history, and we shall see this.

But we have stayed looking too long at it. We

must go back to our mountain peak. Look now across some fifty miles, and we get a glimpse of what was the land of the Philistines, in the day when we first hear of Moriah.

Had we been there, at Beersheba, we might have seen some travellers slowly taking a path across the country to the place where we stand on the mountains of the land of Moriah. We might have heard the words of one who was the leader, who, when they saw the mountains to which they were going, rising before them, told the servants to stay behind, while he and his son climbed the mountain. And we might have seen on the father's face, perhaps, something of the sorrow and grief that filled his heart ; but which were not allowed to hide the fixed, steady resolve, at all costs, to obey the voice he had heard.

Do you all know what I mean? I am sure many of you do. You know how these two, the father and his only son, passed up together till they reached the top of the mountain ; and how with hands that may have trembled, but never faltered, that altar was built, where the only son, the darling of his father's heart, was to be offered up in sacrifice to the God whom Abraham would obey,

even at the cost of the life dearer to him, by far, than his own.

The son, too, was agreed that God's word must be done. He could die, this Isaac, but he could not disobey. What would life have been to them if they had not obeyed?

God's favour was life to them; and though it would be dark to Abraham if the light of his eyes, his only son, was taken, yet God would be in the darkness with him, and could even raise his son again from the dead. And so he would even kill his dearest one for God. Did you ever read the story without a thrill of relief, when you come to the words "lay not thine hand upon the lad"? Can you not enter a little into the almost terrible joy that must have rushed into Abraham's heart as he heard it?

Think of Isaac, too, lying on the wood bound, not yet able to look up at his father's face, but no doubt hearing the voice from heaven. What a moment for him! An instant before he had said, "Good-bye," as it were, to home and friends, and was only thinking of the One to whom he was going. Now, home and friends, and all that he loved were given back to him. And his father's

hands were again on the ropes that bound him ; but to unloose them now, and to hold in his arms the child given back from the dead, dearer even than before.

But now we come to the most magnificent part of this grand story, and I could wish we all felt as Moses must have done, when he heard the words “put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

We are on holy ground too. But the truth is so beautiful, I want you all to get at least a glimpse of it. Have you ever noticed the proof that God speaks of, as shewing the reality of Abraham’s fear or reverence for God? Look at the words, “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.” Grand words for Abraham these were! but, oh, if you and I see only Abraham and Isaac here, we shall miss almost all the beauty!

Surely we cannot help reading between the lines, and seeing that they point to another, and infinitely greater moment, when, as it were, God would say, “Now, poor sinners, everywhere, you must know how God has loved you, seeing

that He has not withheld His Son, His only Son, from you." Perhaps I utterly fail, I feel I do, in conveying to you what I see in these words to Abraham, on Mount Moriah. But, dear friends, look at it for yourselves, and don't rest till you too see a deeper beauty in them than ever you have yet done.

What a tale there was to be told in the tent at home that night. How Isaac's mother must have trembled as she heard it, and how she must have thanked God for sparing her only son. I think none of them could ever forget that mountain, three days' journey off. And I do not wonder that it was the only place in all the fruitful, lovely land of promise, that could be chosen by God for the temple of His own chosen people.

But many years passed over it before then ; and before we look at it again, I want to tell you something that happened more in our own times, and, I think, in our own land.

Some soldiers had become discontented with their lot, and made up their minds to mutiny. Now, perhaps you do not know just the meaning of this. They agreed to get some of the other soldiers of the regiment to join them ; and on a

certain day they were to refuse to obey orders, and take their arms, and get by force what they could not have by right. Perhaps it would lead to shooting those who resisted them.

By talking and persuading each other that things were so bad they were justified in rising against them, the few with whom the mutiny commenced at last got all the regiment to join them. But, as usual in such matters, some of them told their friends what they were planning, and by some means the plot was discovered, and the whole of the men disarmed, and kept in custody.

At last the decision of the Court Martial as to their punishment was made known, and a terrible punishment it was. Every tenth man in the regiment was to be *shot*. The fatal day came when they were to suffer. The whole of the men were drawn up in ranks, and the condemned tenth men had to step out to die.

As the men looked down to see upon whom the dreaded number fell, a young soldier counted rapidly down, and, to his horror, saw that his father was tenth, and stood next him. In an instant he forced his father to change places, think-



ing of the mother and family at home, to whom his death would be a fearful loss ; and before the father could well realise what he had done, the counting came down to them. TEN was called out as it reached his son, who stepped out to die, leaving his father safe in the line of spared ones.

The son died while the father lived, but he lived only because another had died in his stead—died from love.

I want you to see from this story of Mount Moriah, that we get there a shadow of One whose life was really given up for *you* ; and long centuries before it really took place, God gave a picture of what His love would do.

He did spare Abraham's son, but " He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." In the story of Isaac, and especially in the words I spoke of before, " Now I know that thou fearest God, because thou hast not withheld thy son," we get a glimpse of what it cost the heart of God, *to* give up that son.

Perhaps you are like the poor gipsy boy, and never thanked Him for it, although you have not the excuse of that gipsy lad. Nobody had ever told him that God so loved him, but you know it

very well. Will you not thank Him now, if you never did before? And trust Him too?

Now we will see what else took place on this mountain, which, indeed, would only be called a little hill by the side of such heights as we were on last time. But it has as wonderful a history as any in the world, if not even more wonderful.

We will pass over about eight hundred years, and we find that the descendants of Abraham are no longer a few poor people living in tents, but they have grown up into an immense nation, and have possession of the lovely land where Abraham was a stranger living in a tent. David is king over a rich and great people; and he is proud of them, and wanted to know exactly how many subjects he had. But this drew down the anger of God upon him, and the destroying angel is sent to shew David, that great as his people may be, a word from Jehovah can make them melt away like a snow-wreath before the sun.

Seventy thousand of the people of whom David was taking the number, die under the sword of the angel. But we read in 1 Chronicles xxi. 15, that when the angel came to Jerusalem his deadly

sword was stayed ; and on the very spot where God said to him "stay thine hand," David was ordered to build an altar to the Lord.

And there, after his death, his son Solomon built the beautiful temple, the wonder of all lands, where for many years the people went up to sacrifice, and where the morning and evening lamb was offered year after year, pointing forward to that "Lamb of God," to whom we owe our salvation. On Mount Moriah the splendid edifice of gold and cedar that King Solomon reared, lifted its stately head to the skies. But again God's judgment had to come down and shew the people that they could not always be left unpunished, and so the nation was scattered many years after, and the temple destroyed.

More than once this was done, and, as most of you know, when the Lord Jesus came, the temple that then stood was built by order, or permission, of Herod. It was a brilliant, gleaming mass of white marble, with some of the gates of gold, or polished brass of equal value. Altogether, it was a very magnificent building.

But, alas! we know what happened. The Lord "came to his own, and his own received him

not." The Lord of the temple was cast out, rejected, crucified, and His disciples scattered.

But ere He left, the Lord told them that the proud temple that the priests boasted in should be cast down, and not one stone left upon another. How could God leave the temple standing, when His Son, to whom all the temple offerings and ritual pointed, was disowned and cast out ?

Time was given even then for repentance. Forgiveness, even for the last terrible act at Calvary was offered ; and though many gladly received it, yet, as a nation, the Jews were obstinate, in hating the very name of the blessed Jesus, the Eternal Son of God.

So His words as to the destruction of the temple had to be carried out. Now we must pass over a few years, and Mount Moriah, with the beautiful temple, is in the hands of Titus and the fierce Roman soldiery. Then all the awful horrors of war spread over Jerusalem ; the city that chose Cæsar for king—chose a Roman emperor instead of their own Messiah, was allowed to make proof of the tender mercies of those whom they had once chosen.

The temple was set on fire, and, afterwards,

the very stones, among which thousands had miserably perished, were thrown down, and the whole levelled. Roman soldiers, in cruel mockery, drove a plough over Mount Moriah, and the words of Jesus of Nazareth, as they called Him, were all fulfilled.

But Ethel is asking whether the Jews do not go to Mount Moriah now, as they are allowed to live again in Jerusalem? I do not wonder at your question, and only the word of God surely could have so ordered, that never, until the last few years, since the time of destruction, has the foot of the Jew trodden again upon the mountain where his temple once stood.

Ninety thousand Jews were sold by the Romans as slaves, after Jerusalem was taken. Thousands died of hunger, and many more were killed by the soldiery. But none were allowed to live in their own beautiful city, except that long after, the wicked Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate, as he is called, in bitter enmity to Christ, whom he had once professed to follow, tried to gather a few Jews, and to rebuild the temple—to prove, as he thought, the falsity of what our Lord had said as to it.

But it was all in vain. Emperor, as he was, he had to own the power of the One who is King of kings. And though he collected workmen, and got them to dig down on Mount Moriah for a place to lay again the foundations, or to build on the old, he was always baffled. Fire, and strange sights and sounds, terrified the men so much, that at last not one would touch the work, and it had to be given up.

Though now all the danger they spoke of can be easily explained, by seeing that it was caused by the gases and foul air, that had most likely accumulated in the vaults or foundations that were under the ground, ploughed by the soldiers of Titus, and which would take fire and explode when brought into contact with the outer air and light, yet then it was enough to foil the power of the mighty Roman.

As Julian died soon after, he uttered the words that have been famous ever since, "*Oh, Nazarene! Thou hast conquered.*" Yes, and we own Him as Lord and God, and the day will yet come when Jerusalem shall own Him also. But now on Mount Moriah, on the very site where the gorgeous Jewish temple once stood, we may see the

Mosque of Omar, the work of one of the great Moslem califs, who took possession of Jerusalem some centuries after Julian's effort.

To this day the followers of the false prophet carry on their false worship, on the place where Jesus had preached of eternal life to the people of God. It is true many, if not all, of the places of Jerusalem are free now to both Jew and Gentile, but, until our own times, no foot save a follower of Mahomet was allowed to enter their sacred mosque, nor had been since the day when the Saracens came with their cruel war cry, "The Koran or the sword," and replaced by the lofty dome of Omar, the temple of Solomon.

But though none but Moslems are allowed to enter, save by a special permission never granted till lately, the Turks have a tradition that the Christians *will* have possession again of the Mount, for one of the gates, called I think "The Golden Gate," has been closed for numbers of years, and always guarded by a soldier. And they say by this gate the Christians will one day enter, and gain possession of the city. So it is always carefully guarded.

When the time that God has fixed has come,

the crescent, that now glitters over the Mosque of Omar, will pale for ever before the Sun of Righteousness, and Jerusalem will again be a praise and a glory in the earth.

*Now* we know Christ as the day star in the midst of the darkness of this world, *then* every eye will see Him as He comes indeed as the conqueror.

Dear friends, are you not feeling how intensely we ought to value the right of belonging to Him now? and if our eyes never look upon Jerusalem before, we shall see it when He reigns there, and that will be far better. Though when I have spoken to those who have really been there, whose feet have stood upon the Mount of Olives, I have almost envied them. But the great thing is to belong to the Lord and Prince of life now; to value every word of His, and then as we look back over this history of the mountain, we shall have an interest in it all.

As I think of valuing every word of His, it reminds me of what I heard of a poor fellow in a Roman Catholic country, who, as he was walking along a road, saw a great many tiny, little pieces of paper blowing about. One of the little pieces



blew on to his sleeve, and as he went to brush it off, his eyes caught the words printed on it, "Jesus said." The scrap of paper was brushed off, and the man went on his way, guessing at what was really the truth—a priest had found the Gospel in the possession of one of his parishioners, had taken it away, and after tearing it into the smallest pieces, had scattered them to the winds, and thought he had prevented any one reading them again.

He might have spared himself the trouble. The poor fellow who had brushed the piece off his sleeve, did not forget the two words there. Wherever he went, and do what he would, those two words were in his mind, "Jesus said;" and he kept thinking to himself "*What* was it Jesus said."

At last the plague of these words always in his mind, was so great, that he made a great effort to get a Testament, and see what it was Jesus said. Then he read the words, and as he found the beauty of what was written there, he found the precious truth sinking into his heart, and he became a believer of what "Jesus said," and knew, for the joy of his own soul, that His words are spirit and life.

So we see in these days, that God works to

hinder all the efforts of Satan to stop people from reading his word. The poor priest did not know what he was doing when he tore up God's word. But God knew, and meant it to be salvation to the man who walked that way, and to bring honour to His Son by it. Some seek to hinder this if they can.

Only a short time ago a lady, who had a school for girls, was called upon by a gentleman who asked her to receive his daughter as a pupil. He was a Roman Catholic, and after agreeing as to terms and so on, the governess said, "I wish all my pupils to read the Bible with me every day, and I talk with them about it afterwards.

At once the gentleman hesitated. Then he said, "Oh, well! my child could remain in another room till that was over." But the teacher felt that she must be free to tell *all* her scholars of Jesus Christ, and so she said, "No, I must tell all my girls that there is but 'one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.'"

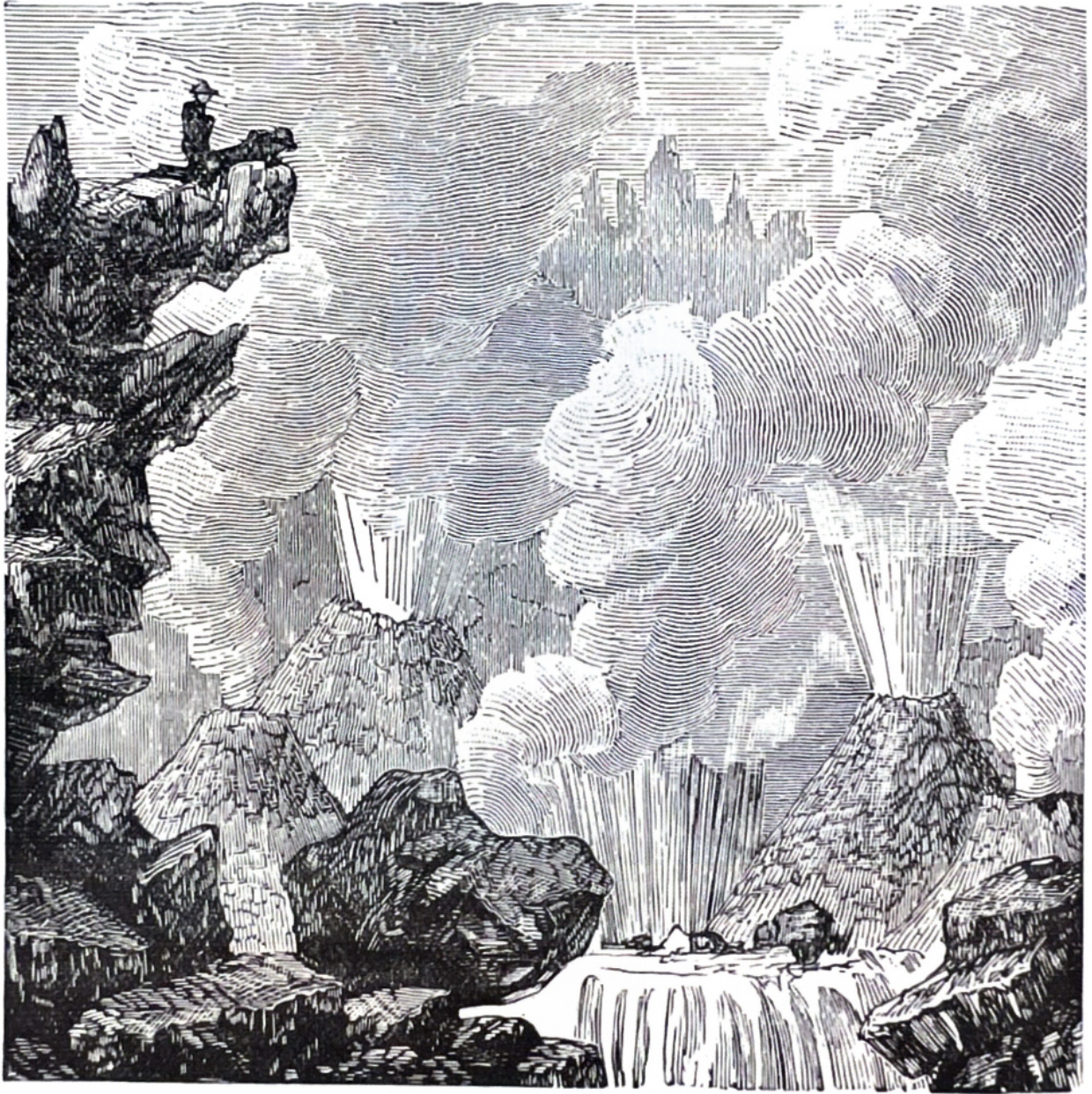
That was enough. The gentleman politely said he feared that he could not arrange for his daughter to go as pupil, took his hat and bowed himself out. He would not accept God's grace.

I want all of you to be glad that we have been set free from the tyranny that would keep our precious Bibles from us. And oh, for you who have not begun to value it yet, what can I say but ask you again to think what it has cost God to give it us, as we had a little picture in our journeyings on and about Mount Moriah.

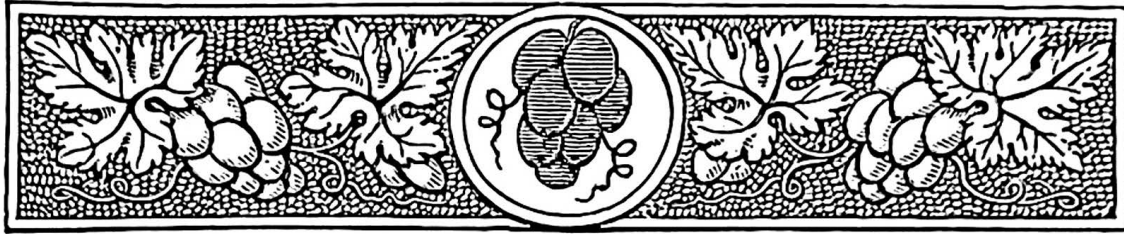
There is a very great deal that you will find very pleasant, and helpful too, if you begin to look out for yourselves all we get about mountains in the Bible. You will be surprised, I am sure, how many pictures we get among these beautiful parts of God's earth, and you will find that they have a voice for all who will listen.







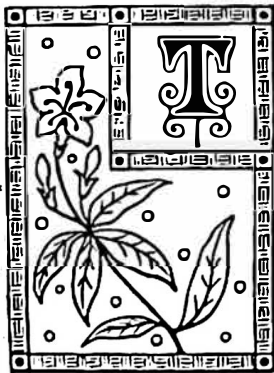
LOOKING DOWN UPON THE FOUNTAINS OF FIRE.



## CHAPTER III.

### FIERY SERVANTS AND THEIR WORK.

“Fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling his word.”—*Psalm* cxlviii. 8.



TO-DAY we will have a change from our usual mountain climb. We will take a journey across the blue Pacific, as far as the Sandwich Islands, and stop at Hawaii, the largest of the group.

I dare say you remember reading that Captain Cook discovered this group of islands, and found it peopled by savages, without a trace of what we call civilisation. Now Hawaii is ruled by many of the same laws as our own island. The people have not only adopted the same system of

government, but a great many of our customs and habits.

The Bible is studied and owned by all, and very many of the natives have proved that it has had the most blessed influence upon them.

The Hawaiians are a gentle, orderly set of people; and their king, whom I saw a few years ago, was a strikingly handsome, intelligent-looking man, no darker than many West Indians, and his dusky skin looked comparatively fair against his jet black hair and beard.

But we must get on to the place I want to shew you, the famous Volcano of Mauna Loa. The start for this vast mountain is generally made from Hilo, a lovely little town on the sea coast, lying in a setting of emerald rice fields and taro patches. Sugar canes cover many acres of the ground at this part, and the town is prosperous and peaceful, in spite of the constant disturber of its outward calm that is some thirty miles away.

Now we start from the busy little town, and for a few miles we have a very good road, and easy travelling. Then it narrows, and at last we enter the jungle or forest. We have to move in Indian file, for the track is narrow, and the almost im-

penetrable forest closes round us on every side, in the gorgeous beauty of blossom and foliage, that a tropical forest alone can shew.

Look! There waves a splendid tree-fern, close to it a bread-fruit tree is growing. Enormous bunches of bananas hanging from another, tell us the name of that tree, though we only know it by its delicious fruit. Now we come upon a group of bamboos; and from one tree to another, lacing them all together, climb myriads of beautiful creeping plants, which, in England, we should value as rare hothouse exotics.

Some of the stems of these plants are as thin as a piece of whipcord, others are as thick as a man's arm, and they fling their green and flowery tendrils to the very top of the highest trees, and from one to another, till tree and climber often seem but one.

Mile after mile of this forest is passed through. Then we come upon a belt of cocoa-nut trees, and soon after we reach the black lava at the foot of the mountain.

Here we find that three miles of hard climbing lie between us and the summit of Mauna Loa. The whole of the way we must struggle over great



waves of lava, through heaps of scorixæ or ashes, treading carefully too, for in many places the lava seems only a thin crust over the fiery depths below. As we rise higher and higher up the giant height, the cold becomes intense, and when we at last struggle up to the last ascent and find our object gained, and ourselves on the very summit, we can look down and see miles upon miles of one vast waste of lava, extending farther than the eye can reach.

The summit is unlike any other mountain top that I know of. It is a vast plain or table land, extending for nearly twenty miles.

Here we get a view of the strangest sight possible. Far below lies one of the great craters ; as seen by night, this is found to be filled with lava, that rises into fountains of fire, falling back in showers of fiery spray. Jets of fire leap up from the black waves, and gleam like stars in the red darkness around. But the wonderful sight of all is the fire fountain, rising sometimes to an immense height. Very terrible is it to see the vast crater, miles across, gleaming on every hand, with the strange lurid fires.

Another crater, or opening, in this mountain, is

the one so dreaded by Hawaiians. It is called Kilauea. I can only describe it by saying it looks like a huge pool, or lake of fire. Out of this lake of fire seem to rise cliffs of the hardened lava, reaching perhaps for a mile. Others again rise, forming the outer edge of this crater, that is eight or nine miles across. But who can tell you what the inner crater is like? Waves of fire seem to boil and surge there in awful fury, splashing and roaring with terrific noises. And the liquid lava is never still, never seems the same for five minutes together, but rises in bubbling fountains and jets, that hiss as they fall back upon the fiery waves below.

Ah! it is an awful sight this "lake of fire," in the crater of Kilauea. It reminds me, by the dread which the sight of it inspires, of that other lake of fire that shall never be quenched. The fire here will be quenched one day, and even as it is now could only destroy the body. *That* lake of fire will never be put out. And who will find their miserable dwelling-place there? All those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Do you not think, then, the most important

thing is to see that *our* names are there? Or, rather, that is *one* of the most important.

But to go back to our Mountain. It is from this crater that burst the terrible river of fire, that has desolated the country over and over again. Only a few years ago, in 1881, for weeks the summit of this great mountain seemed to be a mass of flames; and then fiery torrents swept down the sides and formed one stream of red glowing lava, that swept down more than a mile wide to the sea, setting on fire everything in its way, and overwhelming the forests as if they were garden plants.

As it appeared to be flowing to the sea, in the direction of Hilo, the people of the town had to prepare to leave their pleasant homes; but, as before, the river of fire diverged so as to leave one part of the town, at least, in safety; and, I think, all but the outskirts of it were saved. But many hundreds of acres of flourishing sugar canes and rice fields were utterly destroyed.

As we think of this volume of fire that we see at Mauna Loa, and reflect that that is only a single opening, into the inner part of our world, can we help praising God that *His own*

will be taken safely out of this world before that great day comes, when "the earth, being on fire, shall be burnt up," when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise" ?

Think of the being left behind for that, because you would not have Christ's grace and love. We shudder as we look at that hideous pit on the sides of Mauna Loa, with its lurid red cones and inky black rivers of solid lava, where it has cooled, and its horrid heavings and shakings as the waves of fire, or red hot lava, force their destructive way to the surface, or downward to the sea. And as we think of the villages and plantations that have been buried under the seething masses, we feel thankful, I know, that we have our homes at a safe distance from it.

But we must not think that even this burning mountain and lake are useless. They do a work that *must* be done, and that nothing else can do. God makes nothing that is useless, and His hand is very plain here. No other could say to those terrifying billows and surges, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." None but He could have lit and kept those fires burning.

In different parts of the world these fiery mountains rise, as you all know ; and, although the Hawaiian mountain is one of the most fearful and wonderful of all that we know, yet all the *known* loss of life caused by it has not been so great as that at some of the world-famed battles that people speak of even proudly.

Think of the loss of life at Waterloo, or at Metz, or Strasbourg, and it is almost incomparably greater than all the deaths caused by all the eruptions in Hawaii.

Even if we think of Vesuvius, and the cities that were buried by the ashes from it in the year 79, when many people perished, even then the number was not nearly so great as the record of those who died because they would not give up their faith in Christ. They died in every kind of anguish and torment, because they resolved to obey God rather than men, and would not deny His word. One man even boasted that, in his lifetime, he had sent eighteen thousand Christians out of the world by fire, and rack, and drowning, and all the other devices that the followers of Rome are so skilled in !

The cruel Alva had to come to his death, too.

The day is also coming when he will have to stand at the great white throne, and give an account for all those belonging to Christ, whose lives he crushed out here, but whose spirits were safely beyond his reach.

Ah ! dear young friends, as we think what men and women have done on this earth ; as we think of the many who have won the martyr's crown, because of the awful hatred of the hearts of men to Christ ; as we think that *our* hearts are just as bad, let us more than ever see what a mighty work God has wrought in saving us from them.

Our hearts are exactly the same as those of the men who lit the fires to burn their fellow men to death, who dashed mothers and children together, sheer down the awful precipice, where they fell in mangled heaps on the cold, cruel rocks below. Do not think that we are one whit better than the savage persecutors, but praise God that we can be saved even from our own evil hearts.

Surely we have had a glimpse of His *power* to-day, as we saw His *love* on Mount Moriah before. Let the power and the love sink deep down into our hearts. All His other works praise Him. The voice of the mighty sea speaks His glory :

the voice of the mountains tells His praise. Shall we not praise Him too ?

Will I tell you something about the cities buried by the ashes from Vesuvius ? Yes, if you wish it, but I am afraid most of you know all about it. Oh no, you do not, you say !

Well, you know it was not long after the apostle Paul had been a prisoner at Rome, and had stood before the fierce Nero, and, at last, was slain for his faithfulness. The apostle John was still living, and here in England the Romans were still struggling with Britons, and sending some of them, fair-haired slaves, to Rome.

It was then that the strange and terrible cloud rose above the cone of Vesuvius. Men who escaped, as many did, said this terrible cloud looked like a pine-tree rising up into the air and spreading out into branches, farther and farther, until it seemed to cast darkness over the whole sky.

As seen from the city of Naples, it was the first of the awful rain of ashes that fell hotter and thicker every moment. Then came large stones, and blocks of pumice, and clouds of sulphur, and rushes of flames and sulphur, and before the rain of ashes ceased Pompeii and Herculaneum were

buried fathoms deep. “ When next the sun shone in their streets, George the Third was king of England !” Eighteen long centuries had their sleep lasted.

Covered over by layers of ashes, Pompeii, and all the inhabitants who were not quick enough in leaving the town at the first warnings of the danger, disappeared entirely from the eye of men.

On that sultry August day, the people had been living the usual life. The school boy and his teacher had gone through the lessons, the cook had been busy making sausages ; and they, too, came to light eighteen hundred years after they were made. Strings of onions were hanging there, and in one cellar wine was discovered in the casks, or amphoræ.

They did their needlework too, those Pompeiian girls, and we see their thimbles to-day, in the museum at Naples, where most of the strange relics now are, that were found in the town.

It appears that they punished their troublesome people in the same way that we did in England a century ago, so they had put two of them into the stocks, and there they stayed for very nearly two thousand years.



A pet dog was given a fine collar and chain, and this, I suppose, caused his death, for when the fearful shower of ashes came the poor dog was chained fast, and in spite of his struggles, he could not get away, and so he perished. One can see the efforts he made by the skeleton, that was all that was left of somebody's favourite.

The little children had their toys very much as ours do to-day. Lions and tigers, and dogs made in clay, were found, left by the little hands that used to play with them. They broke their crockery in those days, the same as, very often to our sorrow, we break ours. I do not know whether they used "diamond cement" to fix their jugs and basins together again, but they riveted them in just the same way that we have ours done now.

One was found at Herculaneum that had been mended in this way. Just think of the time that those rivets have lasted! Then in the town itself they had their cab-stands, only they did not call them so, but they had vehicles for hire in ranks, in much the same way.

They had shops where people could dine, and get their breakfasts, and there they had marble counters, they weighed their meat and cheese with

the same kind of scales, or steelyards, that the butchers of our towns use to-day. So we find that life was very much the same in those long buried towns as amongst ourselves.

But they did not build such large rooms as we like. A friend who has explored these old dwellings, told me they appeared like the smallest cottages in the size of the rooms. And the streets were narrow. But they had their gardens, with rock work in them, perhaps for the lovely ferns that grow wild there, just as we build rockeries in our gardens now.

Walking in these cities now, in the light of the sun, seeing them all exposed to the gaze of every curious eye, we get a faint glimpse, as it were, of what resurrection means.

Century after century rolled away, after God had called forth those terrible floods of lava and ashes from the mighty Vesuvius, and the grass had grown over the black heaps, and seeds floated on the air and settled amongst the mounds, and trees and plants sprang up, and grew and lived, and then died and formed soil for other and larger growths.

Empires passed away, nations were born and

died, no one knew as they wandered round the country, in the shadow of the fire mountain, that they trod upon the graves of a village, or a town.

But they did, and when God gave the word, that town was again brought to light, and the lives of the men and women read out in open day. *Our* lives will all be read out. Not a thing has escaped the record of our days and years, forgotten by us, but all written down in the book that no human eye sees.

Does it frighten you to think of that? All those hidden sins will come out then, those follies and worse, that we are ashamed of now may be, all will come to light. But for those who know that God has said to them, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins" (Isa. xliv. 22), to those, the thought of the whole of their lives being made known, has no terror, for it will only remind them of how much they have been forgiven.

Only make them able to enter with deeper joy into the vast salvation that God gives to all who will take it. Perhaps some of my young friends may say I make it a very easy thing to get salvation. Well, is it a *hard* thing to breathe in the

air around you? Do you find it difficult to take your share of the sun and light that fills our skies? You take it all without an effort.

Dear friends, forgiveness of sins, peace with God, His constant favour, a place as His child, in Christ, is as free as the air you breathe, to every soul under the sun. God bestows His gift of eternal life to all who come to Him. But do not mistake, when you have taken this life it is to be *used for Him*. As to the past, we who *have* taken this gift of God, can say,

“Not a question now disturbs me,  
As with Thee the past I see,  
'Tis a page of blotted history,  
But 'tis all read out to Thee.”

And as to the present, how can we help saying?

“Lord Jesus, Thou hast bought me,  
And my life, my all, is Thine,  
Let the lamp Thy love has lighted,  
To Thy praise and glory shine.”

But never forget, salvation is free to all. And as you think of these cities of Pompeii and Hercula-

neum, buried entirely for sixteen centuries, and now, in part, opened out again, so that on the very pavements where the people walked then, others walk to-day; as you think of this, remember that the whole world will, one day, come again into the light.

No matter is it if as many thousands of years should pass, as we count the centuries since that day when Vesuvius blotted out these and many other towns.

Time is nothing to our God, but a means of proving His love. But to us time is an invaluable gift, and there are few of us but have to regret how much of it we have wasted. We may be building up a life out of very homely duties, well and cheerfully done for love of the One who gave His Son to die for us, and that life may all be one long record of His power and grace.

I know I feel ashamed as I speak of it, but it nerves me to seek His help, to make the present and the future less unworthy of Him.

I think of some I know spending their lives in a round of toil, often dreary, disagreeable toil, but done cheerfully and well, spite of hours of sadly tired feelings, because they believe the best way to

glorify their God and Father is to do well the meanest duty that lies nearest to them.

And though nobody seems to notice it, and they think, perhaps, they are doing nothing for their Lord, and may almost envy those who can speak or write for Him, yet I know those unnoticed ones are oftener building up that which will stand the fire, in the day when God shall try every one's work, than many who now seem to be doing much for Him.

The thing is to have our hearts right. Let our Lord rule there, and our lives will be right. But we must not be lazy, and think we can get this by merely wishing for it. I often remind you of Daniel, you know, and I often feel I need to think of his purpose of heart. For we want that firm determination that he had, and then our path will be plain enough. I dare say most of you know what it is to have gained a prize at school, and you know you did not get it by merely *wishing*.

What did you do?

"Worked hard for it," Florrie says, as she thinks of the nice books she has at home, with "Reward for diligence" written in them. I remember, also, the delight of some of you, after

hours and weeks of practice at music, or drawing, when your names were read out as first on the list, and, therefore, prize winners. And I think of those who will hear those words at the end, "Well done! good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." That was not got by merely wishing for it.

Hours of hard labour make up the lives of those who win that reward ; whether the labour is that of a girl or boy at school, or of a father in his study or his shop, or of a mother in her family, or daughter making the house happier and pleasanter to the rest of the family.

So make up your minds to get the prize, and then set to work, and *persevere*. I am sure some of you have known prizes won at school by those who were not half so clever as some of the other pupils, but they *persevered*, and plodded on and on, very often working in play hours, because they knew they could not learn so quickly as some. The result was, that to their own surprise, as well as that of others, they won the prize, while the clever ones very often let half the term pass before they really set to work in earnest.

Some grown up people seem to let half their

lives go by before they begin to use them properly. I don't know whether you have ever thought of it, but I am very glad to think of five little words that give a kind of clue to me, as to our lives when we pass out of this world, "His servants shall serve him."

I am not going to tell you that the servants there mean those of us who belong to the Lord now, but it tells me that none of His people will be idle in glory, and I think it is very pleasant to know, that though we can do so little for Him here, not a quarter so much as we would like, yet the day is coming when we shall be able to serve Him just as much as we could wish.







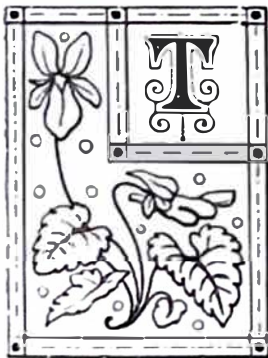
## CHAPTER IV.

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### THE MISERY OF THIRST, AND THE BLESSING OF BEING SATISFIED.

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“ And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the Mount.”—*Exodus* xix. 20.



**T**RY to imagine yourself in the midst of almond-trees, fig-trees, olives, and peaches, the most luxuriant vines, with their great bunches of cool, sweet fruit, fine pear-trees, and not least, beautiful masses of glowing flowers !

Now does not this give a perfect idea of a garden, in the midst of a fertile country ? Yet, where do you think it is found ? If you will come with us on another mountain ramble, you shall see for yourself.

Our last journey took us through the splendid forests of Hawaii, where we saw the tropical plants and trees, that make the island a perfect garden of verdure. To-day our route takes us through a very different country. Not a tree or shrub, scarcely a blade of grass, is to be seen here, for we are passing through a stony valley, rugged and rocky, and worn into hollows by the winter streams that rush down from the heights on each side of us.

On and on we go, moving slowly because of the rugged track we are following. Now we pass a few stunted thorn bushes, and that is the only sign of growth we see in all this valley.

But we are anxiously looking out for some sign of a fountain. We have travelled hour after hour, till our water is exhausted. And as, at last, after travelling for days between rocks and mountains rent and splintered, as if by constant earthquakes, for several miles an opening in the mountains has become visible, we turn aside to a place where a solitary palm-tree grows, and casts its shadow over a little pool of water.

At home, we should never think of stooping to drink from such water as this, but here, in the hot

and sandy desert, we are glad of anything to relieve our burning thirst. Were any of you ever *very* thirsty, and unable to get any good water? I remember once being so for a long time.

During my travels I was obliged to stay in one place where the water was so horribly bad, so nauseous, that to drink it, excepting to keep one just from being quite parched, was impossible. Tea or coffee made from it was only a little better, and all the food cooked with it was tainted with the loathsome taste, eggs being about the only thing one could eat in comfort, as they were free from it.

I learned at that time a little of the torment of thirst, and to be grateful, too, for pure water. Night after night did I dream of having plenty of sweet, clear water put before me, and generally woke to find myself with burning thirst.

The people of the district were so used to it that they did not suffer as I did, but they did not drink the water excepting with coffee or some kind of spirits mixed with it.

When I went from this place and reached one where, for the first time for weeks, I could get a glass of good water, I felt as though it was the



MOUNT SINAI.



most delicious drink in the world. In our desert journey this is invaluable, and so the little palm-shaded pool was a delightful oasis to every traveller who passed along the rugged defile, or valley, that we are following.

At last we come to a still narrower defile, where the rocks rise above our heads on either side for many hundred feet, and the track is so worn by the torrent that dashes along it in winter, leaving heaps of rocky rubbish as it forces its way down, that it is hard to get along at all ; but, at length, we come out upon a sort of table land, and there, towering as it seems to the very skies, stands the hoary tempest riven peak of *Mount Sinai*.

A black spot on the foot of the giant mountain is the monastery, where travellers are lodged who explore the heights, but from this spot we can form little idea of the vast size of the great pile of buildings that nestles at the foot of the bleak, bare rocks that tower high above its head.

Though for a great many miles before we reach Mount Sinai, we have been rising higher and higher, yet it is here springs the huge granite peak called by the Arabs *Jebel Mûsa*, and known to us as Mount Sinai. Here, in the very midst of this

peninsula of stone, that looks as if it had once been a sea of lava, dashing into huge waves, and suddenly hardened, blooms the beautiful garden of the monastery, looking all the more refreshing in its vivid greenery, because of the sterile desert we have been passing through for days before.

Some years ago, the monks who lived in the monastery, had to barricade their dwelling because of the attacks of a fierce tribe of Bedouins, who had their camping place near ; but the danger has since passed away, and travellers are able to pass through all this territory in safety.

A railway has actually approached a point not very far distant from the venerated mountain itself. Distance, as reckoned here in the desert I mean, it might seem a long way to us in England, with a railway station within a walk of most towns and villages ; but when we look up at Jebel Mûsa, we can imagine the multitude of the children of Israel encamped below in the plain, and in the valleys that stretch in every direction from this point.

You all know that Mount Sinai is not a solitary mountain, but, as usual, one of a great range that extends for many miles. There are three, if not more, large peaks that rise thousands of feet

above the surrounding heights and valleys that lie between; a vast sea of granite, broken up into every fantastic shape and size, that can be imagined. Very grand and wonderful is the sight. But what must it have been when all the plain below was crowded with the tents of the Israelites, when God Himself came down to speak with them!

Let us look, for a moment, at the words they heard. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." (Exo. xix. 4, 5.)

Do not you think it marvellous that God should speak to them like this? The people not at all thinking what it meant to obey God, not feeling how impossible it was for sinful hearts like theirs and ours to obey God in their own strength, said, in reply, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Ah! they had to learn that they had no power to do. They did not believe this, so God had to prove it to them.



One thing, as you all know, that they were forbidden, was to make and bow down to an idol, and before Moses came down from this mountain, they had made the golden calf, and were saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" It is hard, at first, for you and me to believe that we are altogether bad, and cannot do right, as God sees it, until we belong to Him.

When we get our faces soiled without knowing it, our friends will say to us, "Go and look at yourself in the glass," as then we shall soon hurry off to wash it. So, it seems to me, was this law contained in the ten commandments given to these Israelites. It was to shew them how sinful they were. Our friends did not suppose that looking in the glass would make us clean, and the Law never cleanses people from sin, but it shews them they are sinners, that is, if they are honest.

When God came down in His mighty clouds and darkness, with lightnings and thunderings upon Mount Sinai, the people trembled and were afraid, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and not God, lest we die."

They heard the sound of the trumpet, and they saw the fire and smoke that wrapped the Mount

as in a veil of cloud, and they feared. But they did not fear their own hearts, and so they miserably failed. They tried to please God in their own strength, and never did it.

I am sure we are all glad to know that God has not told us to keep those holy laws. They shew us what we ought to be, and shew us that we are sinful. They make us value more than ever the One who died to set us free. But now we seek that our hearts and lives should be for Him in a way that a Jew, under these holy laws alone, never could do.

The Law, you know, was given to the Israelites, not to Gentiles ; as for us, we are under the law of Christ now, free to love and serve Him, and as we go on, if we are diligent, we shall find many a little thing here and there that we can do for Him.

While we read this tale of Sinai, let us never forget the lesson it has for us. First, it proves we are sinners, then it tells us our need of another to approach God for us, because we are unable to approach Him of ourselves ; and then, looking on, let us remember those precious words, " Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." So on this mountain again, as on Ararat and Moriah, we

find what we need in Christ. All is wrapped up in His blessed name.

It is because they know nothing of it, that the poor people of Mongolia have dedicated some of their splendid mountains to their false gods. If we go now to this far off country, and take a walk along one of their public roads, we shall constantly hear the name of their sacred mountain, Wu T'ai, and if we are in a road leading to this famous Mount, we are sure to see crowds of pilgrims, of all classes, on their way there.

The Mongols think, that when they die their spirit passes into another body, and lives its life in that until death also claims it, when the spirit again takes up its abode in some other body, and so on for an indefinite time. They believe, also, that one journey to Wu T'ai will make one of their lives quite happy, two journeys would give them two lives of happiness, and so on with all the journeys they can make to that place. So we may imagine they spend a good part of their lives in travelling, that is those who are devout Mongols, and most are so, though, as in all nations, there are some who care only for the present life.

This mountain is to the Mongols what Jeru-

salem is to the Jews, or what Benares was to the Hindoo. Though it is not really in Mongolia, but in the province of Shansi, a fortnight's journey from Peking. Some of the summits of the range where the famous Wu T'ai rises, are snow-capped all the year round.

One of them is said to be the scene of a constant miracle, for ice can be found in a little cave there in the hottest day of summer; not as in the Alpine glaciers, but hidden from every source, so the poor Mongols call it "The ice of ten thousand years," and go to look at it as a great marvel.

We can see that it is only the natural result of the intense cold of ages of winters, where no sun ever can reach to melt it, so there the ice remains; and although there is little doubt that it does melt imperceptibly in summer, the next winter more is formed, and thus the ice is always found there.

Now I must not forget the curious device with which the Lamas, or priests, delude the poor pilgrims.

All around the mountains, in the little valleys or on the hill tops, are the Buddhist temples, and here are numbers of wheels set up. One of the mountains has three hundred wheels, and the poor

ignorant pilgrim passes along and sets them in motion, one after the other, and every one is supposed to be worth a prayer, and to add so much merit to the one who sets them going, and so they think it is a great help to them on their way to heaven.

They do not think, however, that these praying-wheels do away with the need of their own prayers, but only greatly add to their number. Are you not sorry for such stupidity? and how thankful we ought to be for the pure, holy faith, that has been revealed to us in the word of God, instead of the foolish fables that are mixed up with what is honest and good in the religion of Mongolia.

As the countries where the Mongols spend their wandering lives are now opening more than ever to Europeans, we may hope that they will learn the brighter faith of the Bible. I think if Christians would make a little more effort to teach their fellow creatures the way of life, there would not be so many still in darkness. Many efforts are made, I know, but there is room for plenty more. We cannot know the joy of salvation for ourselves, and not wish to take it to those around us.

Did you ever hear of Tellstrom, who has some-

times been called the "Apostle of Lapland?" He was a painter, and when first we hear of him he lived at Stockholm, where he had heard an English Missionary preach. Here, it is supposed, he learnt for the first time the value of his soul, and the price the Son of God had paid for it.

After a time he began eagerly to tell the other apprentices what he had learnt for himself, and used to read and pray with them in the bed-room they shared at night.

One thing led to another, and it was not very long before Tellstrom had a number of the children of Stockholm around him for a Sunday school, and taught them to read and love the Bible. But he was not satisfied with doing this only, he would go round to the different workshops and talk to the artisans of their souls' future. He would take Bibles, and persuade people to buy them, as he was too poor to give them away.

On Sunday mornings he would leave tracts at the doors of a great many houses, and invite the people to go to the preaching of the word. Somewhere about this time he had read about the poor Swedish Laplanders, and was grieved at the tale of their misery and need. There were

thousands of them, he believed, who knew nothing of God or of Christ, and he resolved to do what one man could to help them. Though he knew not a sentence of their difficult language, he picked up a Lappish grammar, and New Testament, and worked hard to make himself able to read and understand it.

The cold of the winter of Lapland is intense, and as it is winter for nine months out of twelve, and the ground is like iron, no vegetation is then seen, and reindeer flesh is almost the sole food, excepting fish.

Tellstrom had to think of all this. Could he endure the cold where even spirits freeze, and where nothing but being covered in furs, from head to foot, could enable even the Laplanders to exist in the open air? How then could he, who had lived all his life in the much milder climate of the south, and been accustomed to warm workshops, endure the ice and snow of Lapland?

To answer this to himself and others, he made a practice in the winter that followed his first thought of going to the Laplanders, of going up and down the stone steps of his lodgings, and about the court where he lived, without either

shoes or stockings, and he found that no very serious results followed, so he concluded he would be enabled to endure the cold in the place he longed to go to.

There were many and great difficulties in the way, but at last his energy and determination triumphed over them all, and he started for Umea.

Trials were not by any means over when he reached the place of his work ; but having already overcome so many, he was not daunted by new ones. He went on quietly making his errand of love known, and, before many years had passed, he had the joy of seeing a great difference in his poor countrymen, so that even the records of crime were greatly lessened, and notice taken of it by their government.

For nearly thirty years Tellstrom laboured among these poor people. Schools were formed, and Bibles circulated in places where they had never even been thought of before. All this was the result of one man's eager desire to bring others into the joy and peace he had himself found by believing in Jesus Christ.

I know many of you will say at once, "but we cannot become missionaries," and I am not sure it



would be a good thing if you could. But because you cannot do great things, you must not fall into the other extreme, and so think that you can do nothing. As I said once before, the thing is to do well the duty that is at hand.

I know the sorrow of *not* having done it, and the wasted weeks and years of one's life are not a pleasant memory. Do not be tired then, and discouraged because your work does not shew much result. Remember what the Lord said about the cup of cold water, and if no one seems to take any notice of your little efforts at home, to make things brighter there, do not leave off the efforts. There will be One who takes note of all, sees and records every struggle against the wrong too, and He will "renew our strength," whenever we go to Him for it.

Perhaps you are not strong, and that makes it hard to be bright, or even patient, through the long days that used to be so short, when you were able to be busy all day like other people. Now you are often so weary, and the pulses throb so painfully, that you would like to lie down, and sleep away the long hours, when you feel so good-for-nothing.

Your dearest friends cannot always enter into the trial it is to you even to get up and lie on the sofa in your pleasant room. They may know nothing of the ceaseless struggle for patience, of the battle against depression and weakness. And it is well they do not. Why should they be saddened with a knowledge of the burden life often seems to you?

But never forget, dear friend, that God sees and knows it all. He knows you are His. He has heard your prayers, perhaps for deeper trust in Him, and he answers them by taking away the health and strength you had (all unknown to yourself) been leaning upon instead of Himself.

He lets you feel your own weakness, not to crush you with the sorrow of it, but to teach you to lean upon His strength—to enable you to know the deep deep meaning of those wondrous words, “My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Thus try, dear friend, to take your weakness and helplessness straight from your Father’s hand, the Father who drew you to Christ. You would never have trusted in your Saviour except God had taught you so to do; and you must not take up to-morrow’s burden

to-day. I know how apt we are to do this, and how far beyond our strength it proves.

But no matter what we see in ourselves to grieve over, and there will always be plenty for that, if we waste our time to look for it, let us, spite of all, rest our heart on God's word. Take some of the many lovely promises, and stay your longing on them. Think of those words in John, "As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you"; and those others, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." So that we may be very sure, whatever comes, He will

"Cherish that which He did choose,  
Always guard, and never lose."

And if we are willing to have the lot He appoints, half the bitterness, at least, will be gone from it; and if we think of others we may generally find some one who suffers a great deal more than we do, or who has not the comforts that we have to brighten our illness.

If you could have been with me in a visit I paid, some months ago, you would have felt this, I think. I was told of a young woman who had

been ill for a long time, and seemed to have no one to go to cheer her. So one lovely June evening I started for the house. It was very old and tumbledown, but clean.

A woman who lived in the lower part, at last heard my frequent knocks, and told me to go up some loft-like stairs ; and when I reached the top, I found a very large landing that was almost like a room. Some old boxes stood here, and the floor was so old, and had such great holes, that I had to be careful how I trod. I then saw an open door on the other side of the landing, so I knocked, and heard some one say feebly, "Come in."

I went in, and could hardly keep back a startled exclamation, for although I had been in cottages where there was great poverty, I never saw any one ill in such a wretched place. On a mattress on the floor, sat a young woman, her hands clasping her knees, where her head had lain a minute before.

She just lifted her head from her knees, as I went up and knelt down by her, for not a single seat was there in the room. The bedding was as soiled as one could imagine. The poor woman was partly wrapped in an old check shawl, but her

arms were bare, and her mass of black tangled hair fell round her face, and made it look almost wild.

There was nothing in the room but a large old hamper, with straw sticking out between the lid, and some baskets piled on the top ; nothing whatever for either use or comfort that I could see. By the side of the bed, on the floor, was a wisp of blue paper, with a little coarse sugar in it ; and an old jam jar, and a few crumbs on the rough deal boards shewed the remains of her last meal.

The window was a narrow strip, high up out of reach of any one not standing upright, but some sunbeams came in through it, now the only bright thing there. What do you think of that for a sick-room ? But I found it might have been worse, for as soon as I spoke of the Lord Jesus, who had *no* place to lay His head, she brightened up at once, and, to my immense relief, I found she was a real believer in the Lord Jesus, and in spite of the misery that seemed to be her lot, it was all bright before her.

After that, when I went to see her, she would tell me sometimes what happy moments she had, at times, when her suffering did not swallow up all

her thoughts. I found that she had not been able to get the people below to bring her any water to wash with, and she had actually had none for two days.

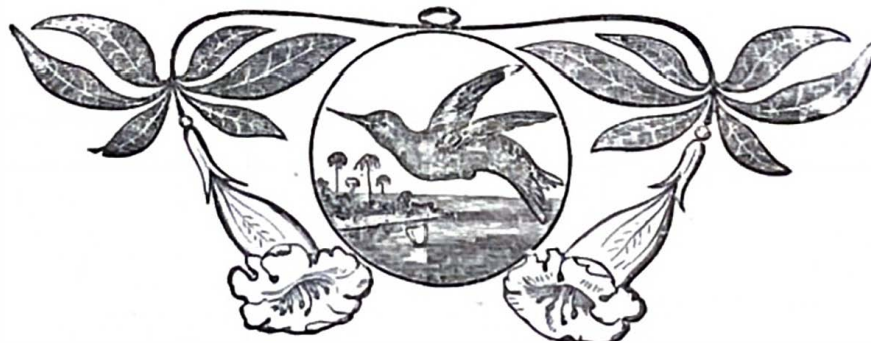
I must not stay to tell you all about it, but I am glad to say she is able to get up now, and earn a little by working for neighbours ; so I hope she will not be in such a pitiable state again. Yet, bad as her case seemed to me, in speaking of it to a doctor, whom I had asked to visit her, he said, " I could tell you of dozens of cases worse than that. She is in no danger of starvation, her friends would prevent that ; but I often am called to poor things who have had no food for days, and have no prospect of any unless I order it from the parish for them." So you will see how much cause we have for great thankfulness, when we think of the suffering and poverty that lie so close to us.

Though, when we find that no hope for the future is added to present misery, it is ten thousand times worse. In spite of that utterly wretched room, and the evident bodily pain of the inmate, the knowledge of Christ Jesus cast a brightness over all. I have sometimes come away from

other sick-rooms, where there was plenty of rude comfort, and where the cottage generally was fairly tidy, when I have felt weighed down by the sense of the awfully dreary outlook before the poor sufferer, because Christ was unknown and unsought. Ah! it is true, I believe most firmly, that,

“Jesus can make a dying bed,  
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

Without Him sickness and suffering are terrible things.



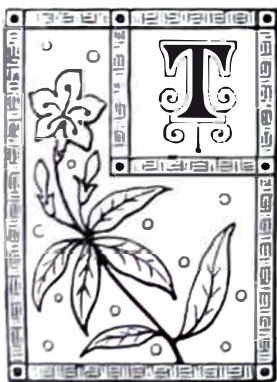


## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP, AND THE DESERT SANDS.

“And Aaron died there in the top of the mount.”—

*Numbers xx. 28.*



**T**O-DAY our travels will take us a long way from the place where we looked upon the grand desolation of Mount Sinai, with its crowd of memories, speaking so vividly to us through the long lapse of centuries since the fiery clouds, and the lightnings and thunders told the frightened people at the base of the Mount, that God had come down to speak to them there.

To-day we leave Sinai behind us, but we are



still traversing a dreary valley of sand, with still more dreary and rugged mountains on either hand. We are now in the wild and savage scenery that tells us we are nearing the strange city, or district, where Esau took up his abode ; a city hewn out of the solid rock. No splendid temples built by hands leave their ruins here, to tell of the long vanished skill of their clever architects.

All here, though, tells of a still more skilful use of the means at hand than even piling up vast and beautiful buildings out of single blocks or bricks.

Temples there are of the highest order of skill, but they have all been slowly chiselled out of the solid rock. Columns and pillars are still standing in many places, as they were left ages ago by the one who had laboriously hewn them out of the mountain. Dwellings are hewn out in the same way, and long ranges of narrow openings tell us that those old Edomites also laid their dead in graves wrought in the rock. But they had grown mighty and powerful in their rocky fortress, and rebelled against God ; and He had said, that though they made their homes in the clefts of the rocks, high up amongst the mountains, yet the day should come when He

would destroy all their wisdom, and none of the house of Esau should remain in all the splendid city of Edom.

So now the city, once so full of busy life, is desolate, and the wisdom and strength that filled Mount Seir with riches and glory, has been taken away, and the crafty Arab, and wandering Bedouin, still search for the buried treasures they think lie hidden amongst the miles of ruins that tell us what Petra, or the city of stone, once was.

High above all the mountains that surround this excavated city, towers Mount Hor, the end of our expedition for to-day. Most likely you know that this mountain is some little distance from the ruined city of Edom, of which Obadiah gives such a striking account, and it may have been one of the pleasant suburbs, when the rich merchants of that place were in their glory. Now the traveller may reach it after passing through the city, as it rises bleak and bare, it may be seen for a great distance, so that it forms the landmark for desert wanderers, by which to regulate their journeys.

But we come to it now because of the record we find in the word, that this mountain was the spot chosen by God for the grave of Aaron.

Why must he die here, and not enter with the Israelites into the land of promise? You all know the answer. We get the full account of the sad reason in Numbers xx. Because Aaron and Moses had not believed God, when He had told them to SPEAK to the rock, and water should flow from it to supply their need. Instead of speaking to the rock, and letting the people all see that it was the power of God alone that gave them the water from it, they had said, "Hear now, ye rebels, must *we* bring you water out of this rock?"

They had disobeyed God in a most flagrant manner, and because of it, neither Moses nor Aaron were permitted to tread the land flowing with milk and honey, which they longed to enter.

Soon after they had so angrily smitten the rock, Aaron is called to go up into the mountain and die there. You thus see God must notice the wrong-doings of His own children. You all know that you often see boys in the streets, who might do all sorts of things that are not right, but your father would never think of punishing them for it. But if *you* were to do the same things he must punish you for it, because you are his children,



MOUNT HOR.



and he wants you to act as his children ought to do.

So God may pass over much in those that are not His children, that He must severely punish in one of His own. This accounts for a good deal that so often puzzles and tries us now. One day we shall see the reason of all God's dealings with us, and then we shall own that,

“With mercy and with judgment,  
Our web of time He wove.”

This Mount Hor has always been a favourite with me, since the time when I grew familiar with it from the account given by a very old friend, of the difficulty he had in getting to the top. As a little child, I seldom could hear too often the tale of his ascent. He had a number of Bedouin with him as guides and guards, for in those days, when, as a young man, he spent years in rambling through many countries, it was not safe to travel anywhere in the desert without a large part of one of the most powerful tribes of the Bedouin as an escort. But for the last twenty years it has been safer.

Our old acquaintance, therefore, had a good many of these wild men of the desert with him, but, for some reason, only known to themselves, they refused to take him up Mount Hor. They had guided him to Petra from Mount Sinai, but would not go to the spot our friend was most anxious to visit.

Well, as the dome that now rises over what is called Aaron's tomb was visible from the rocky valley below, and appeared to have no very great difficulties between it and where they were with the Bedouin, Mr. S. determined to try the ascent without them, so he and his servant agreed to start. Leaving the Arabs looking after them in open-mouthed astonishment, they began the long climb.

At first it was comparatively easy, much more so than Mount Sinai; but before long the two climbers came to an immense chasm that seemed to split the mountain in two, almost to the base.

They could not get across; it was far too wide. So the only thing they could do was to descend into it, and then climb up the other side. This they did with a great deal of sliding and jumping, holding on with feet as well as hands, until they

gained the other side of the chasm ; but they found that was not the only trouble.

Great fissures and openings were constantly before them, and it was only by mounting on the shoulders of his servant, and then drawing himself up to the top of the ledge of rock that opposed them, that he could reach the top of the many precipices in the side of the mountain. Then when he had ascended one of these he must lie down, and with his face over the brink, help up his servant. So after many hard scrambles they at last reached the summit of the bleak and desolate granite pile, that had seldom been trodden by a human foot, since the days when Moses and Aaron went up in the sight of all the children of Israel.

When at last Mr. S. and his servant stood on the summit, the first thing that caught their eye was the far off waters of the Dead Sea. All around them lay the stony sea of rocks and mountains, bare and desolate and dreary, with no signs of life anywhere.

Mr. S. stood on the peak of Mount Hor, and remembered the words of the prophecy, " Behold, oh, Mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will



make thee desolate, I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. xxxv.) From Mount Hor the traveller sees how completely and perfectly these words have been fulfilled. The whole of Seir lies stretched out before him, a scene of desolation. No hum of a busy city comes up to the ear of the traveller, as he looks around on the place, where thousands once lived, and toiled, and died. But he sees how ruin and death have taken the place of the haughty strength that once ruled here.

Though we need nothing of all this to prove to us the truth of every word of God, yet, in His grace, He has been pleased to use such scenes to teach those who doubted, to trust Him fully, as they never had done before.

People who did not trust the records of the only word of truth, have been silenced as they saw the Bible written, as it were, on the very face of the Holy Land. And the very stones of Petra seem to speak, for the words uttered long ago are graven there in the rocks as with a pen of iron.

One of those who have thrown great light upon Eastern remains, is the well-known Caviglia. He once said to a friend, "In my youth I read

infidel books, and believed myself a philosopher. I came to Egypt, and there the scriptures, and what I saw around me proving their truth, converted me." And since the labours of such men as Layard have shewn the traces, and, indeed, the remains, of sixty miles of enclosing wall at Nineveh, none dare mockingly ask where are the traces of that vast city of three days' journey.

All the search into the ruins of the East are so many proofs of the perfect accuracy of our word of truth. And it is well for us to have them, or surely it would not have been left unto our day to make the many discoveries, now so frequent, confirming our belief.

But as the young even are being trained to doubt, I want all of you to see, that if any doubt God's word now, they must do so against the evidence of their own senses. For in our times God, in His grace, has deigned to shew men, by means of such things as remains of cities, tombs, and other ruins, that the most ancient records are there confirmed. It only proves His long-suffering, to us who have believed His word before.

Now I must tell you a little more of the tomb built on the top of Mount Hor. When my old

friend was there, he found that there was an underground vault below the one commonly called the tomb, and as he contrived to enter it, he found there a tomb cut in the solid rock of the mountain itself. This it is that the Moslems reverence as the very tomb where Aaron was laid.

Of course, no one knows really the spot where the High Priest was laid, but we know that the mountain itself has always been recognised as the one that formed his last resting-place. We know, also, with far greater certainty, that the day is coming when the tomb, once dug on Mount Hor for Aaron, will open at that voice that shall cause every grave to give up its dead, and when all who have ever died shall rise again. For joy, with those who have trusted in God, or for everlasting shame and misery, with those who feared and trusted Him not.

What tales these mountains of our world would tell if they could speak! What scenes they have looked down upon! What nations they have seen rise, and live for a few ages or centuries in ever increasing greatness and glory, and then the day came when the decay began, and year by year that nation grew weaker till at last its place was

taken by another, only to go through the same order.

All these long centuries added very little to the mighty peaks that cleft the air high up above the level where men fought and strove for the greatest place. They were as solemn and stern when the Pharaohs ruled over Egypt as they are now. Thus the mountains tell of eternity as we look at them.

Years hence we too shall have passed away, and the place where we have loved and feared, and hoped, will hear other voices ringing out as ours used to do. Others will walk in the paths where we used to go, and we shall be forgotten.

Sad and dreary, indeed, this world would be, if we knew no more than the old Saxon, who said, "We are like the bird who flies into our hall, and pauses for a time in the warmth and light, then flies out again into the darkness and cold. So we know not whence we come, nor whither we go, when we draw our last breath here."

Thank God, we do know, if we are believers, where we are going. There is not the least shadow of doubt about that, for we are told that to be "absent from the body" is to be "present

with the Lord," and "death will be swallowed up in victory." Our life here must bring us into contact with suffering, or we could never understand what God is or what we are.

I think, even in the days when Mount Sinai looked down upon the many tents of the children of Israel spread out below, God gave us a sort of shadow of this. For if you look at the description of the tabernacle, and read the orders given for all the things to be used in it, there is one thing left out, that we should naturally expect would be there.

As the priests ministered in this beautiful tabernacle, they would have gleaming golden walls all around them, over their heads the various curtains, some of them the purple, and blue, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. Very beautiful they must have been. But what did the priests' *feet* rest upon? Upon the bare sand of the desert!

But for that they might almost have forgotten where they were; but their feet never sank in the loose sand that was the only floor of the gold lined tabernacle, without its being a reminder that they were in a place where they were dependent upon Jehovah, for every mouthful of food and every

drink of water. They had no resources of their own.

We are like them, when we belong to God. We have, as it were, the "walls of salvation" all around us. We have nothing but blissful happiness before us when we go to be with the Lord. But our feet are treading a desert world, where we are dependent upon God for everything that will help us to live to please Him. Our feet still press the desert sands, but glory lies above, and Christ's hand is guiding us there.

Very painful and scorching the actual desert floor may have felt to the priests sometimes; and we often come to times in our lives when everything seems black and dreary. But let us take heart. God will never let us have any trial harder than He will enable us to bear, only let us bear it with Him. The danger is in forgetting Him, because we are so borne down. So the one thing we have to do is to "Consider him . . . lest we be weary and faint in our minds." He *never leaves* us. But we often forget that, and try to get rid of our cross, when He tells us to take it up daily, and follow Him.

Dear friends, I do not speak here of what I

know nothing. I know it in the sorrow of darkness alone, and the joy of having Christ in it.

I think we are quite forgetting all about mountains, does Ernest say? Well, then, we will get back to them, and I must tell you a little of the way in which Mr. S. descended Mount Hor.

They went down on the side opposite to the one where they went up, so as to meet the Bedouin at the base of the mountain which they had been travelling round.

They found it was quite as hard work to get down as it had been to get up, and they often had to spring down precipices where a slip might have been fatal. But by holding on to each other's hand, and so lowering themselves over the chasms, slipping and scrambling down in a very undignified manner, they at last reached the lower part of the mountain, where it became possible, once more, to put on the loose overdress of Turkish robe and mantle, that they had been obliged to take off and roll up in a turban, while they were getting down.

Even their flimsy Turkish slippers had been removed, because they had found that their bare feet clung to the rock more firmly.

They had been obliged to adopt the Turkish dress as a disguise, because of the hostile Arabs, who would not dare to injure a Turk, but had scant respect for other nations.

Before we end our journey to-day, we will have a peep at some of the icy regions of Iceland. Long ago, before travellers began to visit these distant countries, Iceland used to be spoken of as a land of fire and frost, so that one of the old writers speaks of it as "a burnt-out lava field," meaning the whole of the country. And Mount Hecla, the volcano for which Iceland is famous, used to be regarded as equal in its deadly eruptions to the fiery Vesuvius; but from recent travellers, we find it is not nearly such a barren country, nor are the eruptions from Hecla so bad as were supposed.

There are no beautiful green forests, with their riches of flower and tree, and the great part of the table land of the country is formed of rock and ice. But in summer, at least, there are to be seen fertile meadows stretching down to the sea, where the sunlight falls upon grass as fresh and green as could be seen even in the Emerald Isle. But the whole of the country must have been, at one time



or other, the result of the work of volcanoes, just as Hawaii seems to have been lifted up bodily out of the blue waters of the Pacific, by the same mysterious, mighty power.

A few years ago, a bright light was observed from Reykjavik, one of the Iceland towns, and the remark was made that it must be a farm on fire. Then it appeared like rockets rising in the air, and the light from this part was so bright that the fire was supposed to be near the town.

The morning shewed, however, that columns of smoke were rising up from the mountains in the farthest part of the island ; and when night after night the same fiery sight was seen, it was known that it must be caused by one of the numerous volcanoes still active.

Of all these, Hecla is most famous, and its eruptions have been very destructive ; but, compared with the other fiery mountains we have seen, it is quite a pigmy.

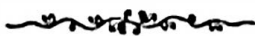
It is said to be not four miles in circumference at the base, but streams of lava that have flowed in boiling torrents for twenty-two miles, were poured forth from the crater not many years since. The water in rivers near became so hot that it

was impossible to cross them on horseback, and all the fish in the waters died.

The lava stream was a mile wide, and, of course, carried destruction wherever it flowed. Masses of stone were hurled miles away from the mountain, some of immense size, and weighing nearly half-a-ton. So though not so large as some, Hecla is capable of great deeds ; and during an eruption the whole of the land, for many miles around, rocks and quakes in a very terrifying manner.

Hecla is generally capped with snow, but the ascent is not at all difficult ; and not long ago three English girls went up with their friends, so we can see it is less frightful than others. But as we think of our own country, and our freedom from all the sudden fires and lava streams of countries where these fire mounts are found, we surely must feel glad that we live far from such flaming wonders.

In our next journey we shall see if we cannot get a glimpse of the monarch of mountains.





## CHAPTER VI.

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### A LOOK AT THE ICE RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS.

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“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo.”—*Deuteronomy xxxiv. 1.*



VERY little do we know about this Mount Nebo, and we can only surmise, that the one now called by this name is identical with that on which Moses stood, when God Himself shewed him the whole of the beautiful land of Canaan spread out before him. That land from which he had shut himself out by his own impatience and unbelief. And because Moses was one to whom God had shewn such special favour, and put him into such a place of honour, it was impossible that his

offence at the waters of Meribah could be passed over unnoticed.

In one of God's own beloved children faults have to be chastised as they would not be in another, because they sin against the boundless love and grace that has put them in such a glorious place. And as the fault of Moses and Aaron was committed in the sight of all the people, so the punishment was seen by all. It was in the sight of all the congregation that Aaron passed up the rugged steep of Mount Hor, and it must have been the same with Moses.

But Mount Nebo, we know, is on the very border of the promised land, and the vast encampment that lay at the foot of the mountains that formed a natural boundary in places, between Canaan and the country adjoining, would soon camp, for the first time, on the other side of Jordan.

Their leader must not pass over with them, but he should see the land soon to be possessed by the tribes he had led so long and so far. As Moses thought of all the way God had led them the forty years, when the very clothing they wore

had been kept by God Himself; when, day by day, angels' food rained down for them from heaven—as Moses thought of all this, how beautiful it is to hear his farewell to the people whom he had so dearly loved. Listen, as he speaks to them for the last time on earth :

“ There is none like unto the God of Jeſhurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. . . . Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.”

Dying words are generally treasured by those who hear them, and, surely, some at least must often have thought of these last wondrous words of Moses. Joshua, no doubt, kept them in his heart, and would often be glad to think of them, when he was left alone, or when sadly he looked back to the place where,

“ By Nebo's lonely mountain,  
On yon side Jordan's wave ;  
In a vale in the land of Moab,  
There lies a lonely grave.”

There Moses rested after the long years of desert

travel. But before he lay down in the peaceful valley that was to be his grave, he had gone up to the top of Nebo, and looked down upon the lovely city of palm-trees, now such a place of desolation. Upon the Dead Sea, and the strange, beautiful Jordan. His eyes would look over to the land of Moriah, where, eight hundred years before, God had given a little picture of what would once, in ages to come, make Jerusalem the most hallowed spot in the whole creation of God.

The whole of Palestine lay spread out before his eager gaze. Then he passed down to the "valley in the land of Moab," and there he closed his eyes upon all things of earth, and God buried him. "And had he not high honour," such as no other ever had? To lie down to sleep with

"The tall rock pines like tossing plumes,  
Over his bier to wave,  
And God's own hand in that lonely land,  
To lay him in his grave."

Yet Moses might have had the happiness of taking his beloved people over the Jordan, and we know how he prayed God that he might be allowed so

to do ; but as he was unable to recall what he had done, the sentence had to be passed.

I hope we may all think of this. It is so easy to say a few impatient words. We think so little of them. Yet we never can tell what the effect will be. Most of you have, I dare say, at some time or other, stood on the shore of a lake, or other large piece of water, and thrown a stone into it, then watched the waves caused by it, as they widened out farther and farther into circles that only ended at the shore. So we may throw a few words on to this sea of life, and they cause a ripple that widens and widens far beyond our reach.

Let us, therefore, be careful of our words, and remember that farther on in this word of God, we are told "it went ill with Moses . . . . for he spake unadvisedly with his lips." (Ps. cvi. 32, 33.)

I know very well how hard it is to always keep back the hasty word, but there is no greater victory than to restrain our own angry temper and hasty spirit. The one who does so is greater than "he that taketh a city ;" and I have brought you both to Mount Hor and this height of Nebo, to remind us all of this, and to make us more

constantly think of our need of the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips." (Ps. cxli. 3.)

Now I must fulfil my promise of a glimpse at the monarch of mountains. "But what do you mean by that," asks Allan. "Do you mean the *largest* mountain? If so, I know where it is!" No, I mean the one, though, that is the grandest of European heights. And so you will see that

"Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains,  
They crowned him long ago ;  
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,  
With a diadem of snow."

And a magnificent range of peaks does Mont Blanc rule over. The Alps, as you all know, extends for an immense distance, even to Hungary itself. Here we see, grouped around Mont Blanc, some of the most splendid peaks in the world.

Pinnacles of granite soar into the air all around ; enormous glaciers furrow the vast rugged sides, and it is shrouded perpetually in ice and snow. Until late years, it was always considered a very mad freak to attempt to reach the top ; but the nineteenth century has made a great change, and



now to ascend Mont Blanc is not thought so very much of, for several ladies have done it.

There is very little to be admired in their having climbed the dangerous peak, as it could serve no good purpose, but it is to the observations made on this mountain by scientific men, such as Agassiz, Forbes, and Tyndall, that we owe most of what is known as to the vast glaciers, that form the springs for most of the rivers that spread life and fertility on their course through the plains below.

Mont Blanc is the crowning peak of a vast stretch of territory composed of ice and snow, covering the rocky valleys, and clinging to the top and sides of the granite mass, that seems as if split up by some mighty hand, into terraces and peaks, and domes of immense height and grandeur.

When first I heard of the tour of Mont Blanc, I thought of a walk round the base of the mountain, as one would walk comfortably round a hill in our own land. This was a great mistake. Mont Blanc is so entirely surrounded by mountains that would be considered grandeur itself if they stood alone, that the tour of the mountain means

some hard climbing over a good many difficult passes, and would take several days at the least. We must cross the great St. Bernard, that, as we hear its name, at once brings to our minds the splendid dogs, with their tawny skin and black soft eyes, that still retain the name of the mountain where they have done such good service in days gone past; though now they are not so needed as formerly, because the passage has been made much less difficult, and so it is less dangerous.

On this tour of Mont Blanc we shall see huge glittering glaciers, and white foamy cataracts falling down amongst them. Often we shall be on the verge of the precipices that no line has been found long enough to fathom, and see such vast ruins of rock and boulder, that some one has said it looks as if a granite world had exploded, and left the ruins piled up here, in the midst of the frost and snow of perpetual winter.

As we come to the grand St. Bernard, through a desolate defile, gloomy and wild, we are reminded of the narrow escape of the great Napoleon, when he led his army across it in spring. The carriage road, though narrow and

steep, and sometimes difficult in a heavy snow-storm, has since been cut out of the very rock itself. It gives us no idea now of the peril the army of France was in, when their great captain led them across it.

Then the naked precipices had to be scaled by climbing up, and clinging with hands and feet ; so the soldiers took the cannons from their stocks, and slipped them into hollow trunks of trees, and one half of the men climbed up dragging these, while the others carried the arms and other baggage of their comrades.

Part of the road lies through a forest of fir-trees, skirting a precipice ; and here it was that the emperor had such a very narrow escape : he slipped, and was only saved from plunging into the awful chasm below, by one of the guides seizing his coat tails, and dragging him back to the solid ground.

If the tailor who made that coat had not used good cloth, the fate of Europe might have been altered, for the life of Napoleon hung by it for a moment ; and if it had given way, they thought he must have perished. But fortunately for Napoleon, he was pulled back by his guide in

safety ; and the man was rewarded by a gift of a thousand francs.

Napoleon went on—conquered, and became emperor ; and started on the glittering road that ended at the barren island of St. Helena, where closed the life that had risen so high, closed in years of heart-breaking and loneliness, ere he sank into his lonely grave.

The memory of his cruel wars and ruined country, could hardly have been a comfort to the exiled emperor, who might have been honoured and beloved by that country, as he was by his guards, if only he had been content with the land of France.

But we must not forget that mountains are what we have come for ; and we are nearly at the Hospice, or refuge, that forms the chief resting-place all through the pass. Hundreds of lives have here been saved by the faithful dogs, whom the monks train to find the snow-buried travellers, who have been overtaken in the storms that rise almost as suddenly as Indian hurricanes.

The whirling, blinding dust of snowflakes has perhaps beaten in their faces, blinded their eyes, and hid the track, till the poor traveller sank down

on the ground to rest, and perhaps wait till the storm is over—a fatal rest to many ; for the cold benumbs the senses, and a dreamy sleep steals over them. Then, unless help is near at hand, it will soon be too late.

I remember a friend who had spent a good deal of time among the Swiss hills and valleys, once telling me of some ladies who nearly lost their lives in this way, who were staying at the same house she was in with her friends.

At breakfast, one morning, these ladies said to the friends at table with them, that they had planned to make a trip up some mountains near, I forget the name. They meant to take some luncheon with them, and be back in time for dinner in the evening, so off they started without a guide. I suppose they had been accustomed to climb them alone ; but it is not a safe thing to do, unless one is perfectly well acquainted with the path.

Well, dinner time came, but the ladies had not returned. The dinner was finished, still no one appeared ; and it began to get dark, flakes of snow also were seen, and at last began to fall quickly. My friend became anxious, and went

to the master of the house, to beg him to send help up the mountains, for she knew the danger of being out there alone in a snow-storm.

The landlord himself began then to get alarmed, and a rescue party was soon got together, taking lights and brandy with them. It was some distance to the foot of the mountain, and here was a little *châlet* where travellers rested. In this house they found the shawls, and also the little luncheon basket, that the missing ones had taken with them when they started in the morning. Now the snow began to come faster and thicker, and it needed one used to the mountains to take the lead in the gathering darkness. On and on they went, searching in every drift and crevice for the lost ones.

At last, after a long, long time of weary toil, their efforts were rewarded by coming upon the two poor ladies, half buried in the snow, spite of their efforts to keep it off. Yes, they were found and saved ; and I have no doubt, the rescue party forgot their toil in the pleasure of being the means of rescuing them.

Many have wondered at travellers being lost within sight of help in a snow-storm ; but if once

they felt the bitter cold, and the whirling icy snow around them, they would wonder no more. When these two ladies were safely back at the hotel, I doubt if ever they would attempt to climb mountains alone again.

They had left their wraps and luncheon in the chalet, thinking they should be back there before they needed them; but the sudden storm came on, and drifted so fiercely in their faces, and hid the path, that they became bewildered and sank down, unable to get on.

Happily they were rescued; but I think they must have learned something that day of what it means to be lost and found. Do you know anything of this? I am sure many of you do; and as you think of what you have been saved from, you feel how past all praise is the love that came "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Many such scenes of peril and rescue have passed on the St. Bernard. In winter the dogs are sent out in search of lost travellers, and if they find any, soon bring the kind-hearted monks to the rescue.

All along the dangerous part of the road posts are planted at intervals, with ropes stretched

across, to shew the way when all the defile is deep, deep in snow. Then the Hospice lies in the midst of beds of dazzling whiteness as far as the eye can reach ; and the little lake at the sunny side of the building, is frozen hard until July or often till August, and freezes again in September, so the summers at this height are indeed short and passing.

Even then snow falls nearly every night of the year, and summer brings no beautiful bursting out of tree and leaf ; for no tree, or even shrub, grows here. And when the white robe of snow that veils the rocks, does sometimes melt away, it only shews the bleak, bare crags and pinnacles, and the steep slopes of the mountains.

But there are lovely little flowers and mosses that grow and bloom on the very edges of the ice fields ; beautiful little starry gentian, as blue as the sky above, and little pink flowers whose name I do not know. Yet, in spite of this, it would be a dismal place to live in. The Hospice is built at the highest point ; and many lives have been saved by the efforts made to shelter the frozen travellers. Enormous avalanches sometimes fall here, when the snow accumulates in such masses,



that the sides of the mountains no longer hold them.

A short walk from here takes us into Italy, the boundary of that country meeting Switzerland, just a few yards from the Hospice ; and a very steep, break-neck sort of path soon brings us down from the region of rock and ice to the mountain mosses, then to the grass and larches, after which we pass through the forest of fir, and reach at last the beautiful vineyards and chestnut trees of the valley below.

Looking back now, we see the peaks of Mont Blanc and St. Bernard, with their snowy tops crimsoned in the sunset, so that a few hours have shewn us the winter of the mountains, and the summer of the valleys in July.

I think the view of these mountains from the valleys is lovelier than anything else, for friends have told me that in climbing them, one seems to lose much of the beauty ; but to stand on one of the lesser peaks and watch a party, especially if it be a large one, climbing Mont Blanc, is very interesting, and I think I must give you an account of it as given me by a friend.

“ A large party of Frenchmen had been sent by

government to make some scientific experiments, and their party, guides and all, consisted of forty persons. To watch their movements from the opposite lower mountain, they looked like huge ants creeping along. A telescope was needed to see them well, and through that one could watch them hanging to the face of one of the precipices, or suspended over the gulf of another. Now they were slowly gliding along the brink of a glacier, where every step might need testing before it was taken. Then they were seen higher up, and cutting steps in the snow, or rather, ice path, and appearing to be in danger of falling every instant ;” though very likely the danger was not so great as it appeared to those who were engaged in watching them.

It is from the lovely valley that we entered, after leaving the grand St. Bernard, that we get the most beautiful view of Mont Blanc ; because of the contrast with the splendid forests and verdure of the valley, and the sublime grandeur of the mountain that rises thirteen thousand feet in an almost perpendicular precipice.

Below, the cool green of the chestnuts, rich and deep, vast masses of them flashing in the sunshine ;

and above, amid crags and peak, like a shining dome of alabaster, Mont Blanc gleams in the soft veil of clouds that float around. In bad weather, however, all this would, of course, be very unlike what we see in July.

Now we must leave the valley some miles behind ; and after some hours of traversing the same kind of paths as we have already crossed, we come to the Mer-de-Glace, the great glacier that gives such large and rapid rivers to Europe.

“ What is a glacier ? ” says Gracie. “ I have an idea what it means, but I am not sure I am correct in it.”

Well, I cannot give you the name or descriptions that science would do ; but taking them as they look, I should call them rivers of ice. “ You all know what a river looks like, as you see it descending from a steep part of the country. Imagine this suddenly freezing and becoming solid, though still moving imperceptibly downwards ; and then on the edges of the ice river, close to the banks, imagine great piles and heaps of stones and rocks washed down in its passage from the upper heights, and you will have a fair idea what a glacier is like. I have looked a long

time at them, and can only describe it so." So says a friend, who spent some time amongst them ; and from the beautiful photographs and the engravings I have seen, I should think it is quite as good a description as a more experienced guide would give.

Then the vast size of these ice rivers causes them to split up, and break into a thousand fragments at the edges, as they slowly glide downwards, and come to a part where it is narrow, too narrow for each fragment to pass ; but the edges break away, and down it moves, though so slowly that this was not known, until some of the clever men who were studying the subject, thought of the plan of building a hut on the glacier itself, and fixing a landmark exactly opposite on the solid rock.

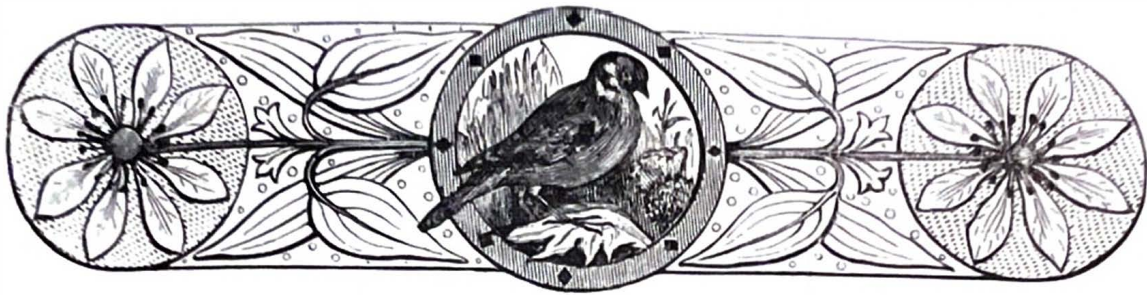
Then it was found that the Mer-de-Glace moved down about five hundred feet every year, as the hut was that distance from the mark on the opposite rock. As the glaciers reach the warmer air of the valleys below they melt away, very gradually, and thus water the valley with the streams that keep it fresh and green.

These glorious ice rivers, therefore, form the

flowing streams that make Europe the fruitful land it is ; and shew us how God stores up the water that means life to millions, until the moment it is wanted, the glaciers, meanwhile, holding it in their cold fingers. For if they were not frozen, they would rush down with such fearful force, that instead of watering the countries, they would carry down a flood, and pour destruction where now they carry plenty ; and if only we searched it out, we should find it was the same with everything. For all God's works are perfect.

I may tell you, perhaps, of an account that was given me a little time ago, of the journey made to the beautiful glacier that gives rise to the great river Ganges ; and as for centuries it was a puzzle as to where the source of the Ganges was, perhaps you will like to hear it. But as we think over our journey to-day, I want to recall these words to you, "The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of all them that have pleasure therein." (Ps. cxi. 2.)





## CHAPTER VII.

### A JOURNEY THROUGH SEVERAL COUNTRIES.

“Gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel.”—

*1 Kings xviii. 19.*



FROM the summit of Nebo that we were looking at last time, the mountain that I want to take you to to-day, is visible when the weather is clear and bright. And I think it is most likely, that in the magnificent panorama that lay spread out before Moses, on that eventful day, when alone with God he looked down from the topmost peak of the mountains, upon the river, and lake, and plain below, Carmel closed the beautiful vision.

What a vision it must have been : the snows of

Hermon in the distance, lying in their gleaming whiteness, far beyond the dark forests of Gilead. Then looking across the Jordan all the land of Judah, with the rocky fortress of Jebus, the hills where so much that concerns us to-day took place; the mount where Abraham proved that God would provide a lamb Himself; and well we know the truth of that. The Mount of Olives, too, and the hill of Calvary, all could be seen by Moses; for we are told, "all the land of Judah to the utmost sea."

So from the top of Nebo, the eye of Moses must have seen the "mountains that are round about Jerusalem;" and amongst them he may have noticed that one where the great work of bearing your sin and mine, if we are believers in Christ, was fully gone into, and for ever finished.

It may well be thought, that before Moses looked his last upon the land of Judea, he had heard of that One who should lead His people through all their journey of life here, and safely into the "Land that is very far off," where their eyes shall "behold the King in his beauty." And as we think of what can even now be seen from Mount Nebo, we are glad the mountain has lately



MOUNT CARMEL.





been identified, which gives another proof of the perfect accuracy of the word of truth.

Mount Carmel looking down upon the purple waters of the Great Sea, that we call the Mediterranean, is one of the most beautiful of all the heights of Palestine, though not so grand as many. But it still shews the fertility, that I suppose it must have had in the days which Isaiah spoke of; the days when "the Lord shall be king over the whole earth," and when "the desert and the solitary place shall blossom as the rose," and when "the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon."

Nor do we now wonder at the many such references to Carmel, for it is clothed with a beautiful carpet of grass and wild flowers, as luxuriant as our English valleys can shew; and above them the olive and laurel trees, the pine, and the oak, spread their broad, massive branches. From our seat amid this pleasant growth of garden and forest, we can look across to the great plain of Jezreel, the battle field of nations, as it has been called.

I am sure you all remember the story of Elijah

and the prophets of Baal, when they were assembled on this mountain to prove the folly of their idol worship. You remember, too, how it was all in vain that they entreated Baal to hear them, even when, in their frenzy, they gashed their bodies with knives, and how Elijah mocked them, and the irony of his words when he told the false priests that perhaps their god was asleep, and needed waking up.

I think a god who needed that would be of very little use, but we all know what did happen. As Baal was only an idol, he could neither hear nor answer his worshippers, and of course Elijah knew this. No answer came from him; and when Elijah had given them nearly all the day to see if they could shew the people any sign of Baal's power, he prepared the altar for his sacrifice.

When all was ready he poured such a flood of water over it, that nothing but fire from heaven could consume it. Then he prayed to his living God, saying, "Hear me, O God, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." The fire came down, and the dismayed prophets of the

idol Baal, and all the people of Israel saw how it burned up the sacrifice, and the wood, and the very stones and dust, and the water.

Down on the ground of Mount Carmel fell the people, saying, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is the God." And then when the false prophets had met with the fate they so well deserved, Elijah girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab down the mountain and across this great plain, to the entrance of Jezreel.

Here Josiah fought with the Egyptian king, and fell by the arrows of the Egyptian archers; and on this great plain Barak, with his ten thousand men, overcame Sisera. And in the present century, Arabs and Europeans have struggled here for the mastery.

To go again for a moment to the top of Carmel, let us look down upon the Mediterranean, and we may trace the ruins of the once proud city, where Felix trembled before Paul, as he spoke of the judgment to come. From here on Carmel too, we can look on to the mountains of Lebanon, where the cedars grew, that Solomon formed into the gorgeous building on Mount Moriah. And if we glance down upon the little city of Acre, it

appears like a mere speck on the waters of the Great Sea.

Altogether, Carmel makes us feel we would like to spend a much longer time upon it, for few places are more quiet and beautiful. Here the voices of mountain and sea blend, as they rarely do in other places, and make us think of the time when all the now desolate places that tell of sin and death, shall have the same beauty and "excellency" given to them.

That little speck on the waters, as Acre appeared from the mountain top, has a host of memories connected with it. It makes us think of Richard, and of Saladin sending his luscious grapes and fruits to the sick king of England, whom he was fighting against. This always made me wish that that generous Saladin could have known the truth, as the followers of Jesus of Nazareth know it. But not alone Jesus of Nazareth is He to us. Though Saladin had rarely heard Him spoken of by any other name, we know Him as Son of God, made both Lord and Christ.

Then again we remember that here, as in every other land almost, save our own, Napoleon left

his mark. He thought a good deal of this little town of Acre, shadowed by Carmel ; for it is said that when talking with Murat, one of his generals, he pointed to it, and said, "The fate of the East depends upon that little town." But the man who overthrew throne after throne, and made, or unmade kings at his will, was himself utterly foiled here ; for Acre never opened her gates to him, and he turned away baffled.

Poor Napoleon ! in spite of all his crime of boundless ambition, he owned before his army, his reverence of God as creator. But, dear friends, that will not give us an entrance into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Napoleon told even of his belief in God's hand, as over-ruling all his plans ; but that is not enough, "*Without faith* it is impossible to please God," and I never knew that Napoleon had that, though we may hope he had.

Acre is still a busy place, and groves of oranges and lemons are met with, as we walk along the outskirts of it, taking our last look at Mount Carmel.

"Will you tell us of the glaciers where the Ganges rise now ?"

As the question comes, I am glad to find that Bertie, at least, remembers our talks on the "great hills." I will take you with me on an expedition to the Himalaya if you will come, or as the name means, I believe, "Abode of Snow."

I remember a friend who had lived in India, telling me of the priceless value of the mountains there, and every height where the snow collected, sending down its trickling streams; and also with them what meant the lives of thousands, for without these streams India would be almost uninhabitable.

The Himalaya is a grand, vast range of mountains; and I have heard that the old Arab geographers called it "the girdle of the world." Here is the crowning peak of Mount Everest, that was spoken of by one of you on our very first climb together. A splendid picture does Mount Everest make, with its grand crowning peak, that towers high above dozens of other giant pinnacles that cluster around it, with every little hollow between them, and every glittering peak veiled with the pure, white, glistening snow.

Some of the passes among these Himalaya mountains are very grand, in the mingling of

forest and wintry heights. The path—thousands of feet below the top of the giant heights, that shut out the sun on each side—winds through a succession of immense trees, of a species of oak, I think, and others that we all know are pines.

The undergrowth is a tangled and wild mass of ferns, thorns, and strange plants, all fresh and green ; but looking up a few yards we see only the bare, dark rocks that tower up and up, and form at the summit those swelling heights and vales, where lies the cold, unmelting snow. Very striking and beautiful is the contrast between the park-like path, at the bottom of the pass, with its brilliant green foliage, and the summit of the rocks that close it in on each hand.

I suppose it is in this range of mountains that we find the largest glaciers, or ice rivers, in the world. Enormous ones come down here, far below the snow line, and as the lower parts of them are generally covered with fragments of rock, and mounds of stones that they have carried down in their passage from the upper region, it is not at all uncommon to find beautiful tufts of grass flourishing among the rocky débris on its icy bed.



Some travellers have ventured to go right up some of these Himalayan glaciers, and found that they were traversed by numbers of crevasses, and in some places the ice seemed honey-combed by the melting and trickling of the water from it. In some of them little streams were formed in the solid floor of ice, and some were quite worthy the name of brooks.

When the head of one of these glaciers is at last reached, they find it closed in on every hand by banks, and fields, and precipices of snow. Sometimes vast slopes of this hardened snow rises up much higher than the top of St. Paul's Cathedral; and then may be seen, at times, the strange sight of part of this mass of piled up and partly hardened snow, falling with a tremendous din on to the river below.

Snow and ice everywhere—domes and cliffs, ridges and fields, are all white and glistening, all are snow. The great danger of travelling here is when the falling snow covers the rotten ice over the crevasses. It needs the constant use of the alpenstock to try every forward step, before the foot is set down upon it. What do you think of such walking as that?

I once had to travel for some miles over a path of snow and ice, so slippery that only great care kept me from constant tumbles ; and gusts of wind blew the frozen ice particles in my face, at times, and half blinded me.

As I went on slipping and sliding at nearly every step, I learnt to be thankful for gravel paths and firm ground to walk upon. And when I reached a path that night, where I could move without my feet slipping from under me, and still more, when I reached a shelter, and could have the comfort of dry clothing and a blazing fire, I felt it was almost worth the difficulty to have the pleasure of the welcome rest.

Some of these Indian ice rivers are full thirty miles in length, and over a mile wide. These have constantly other glaciers falling into them like side streams, forming altogether miles upon miles of ice in every direction, combining to form the one stream that at last reaches the warmer valleys below.

Now we will try and get a few glimpses of the mighty river Ganges, as it rolls its foaming waters down from the mountains. Let us start from Mount Gangutri, where the river is quite wide.

rolling by rocks that sparkle in the sunlight like feldspar. A little beyond we find a few cedars growing ; but after this we see very little beside desolate rocks fallen from the heights of the mountains above.

Now we come to an immense field of snow ; it covers the river, and we must go right through the field to find the stream on the other side of it. There we see it again, and we find great blocks of granite have been cast into it, very likely by earthquakes. Then we see the ruins of an avalanche, that nearly buries river and banks together.

As we pass on we come to a series of cascades formed by the rocky shelves, that the waters pass over. Then they bend sharply round a great peak, that seems to be in the way, and stops the passage ; but the river passes round it, and flows on quite unconcerned.

The volume of water is getting less, so we are not very far from the source ; but as the ascent is getting steeper, and the way rugged and difficult, no one will be sorry, I think. But we must pass on, and now we see again a few clumps of the little dwarf pines. Here we soon

come in sight of another field of snow, and we must cross over a frozen avalanche with all the care we can, or we shall sink in some of the melting spots.

Now let us climb a steep ascent, with masses of granite rising far above us on each side ; and after some time of this hard work, we come in sight of one of the most sublime objects of this lower world, the majestic snow-crowned peak of the mighty mountain, with its three huge peaks.

Still on and on we go, passing ruins of rocks strewing acres of ground, through ice and snow, until we find the stream we have been tracing issuing from a little cave, at the foot of a bed of snow. In front, and beyond, and above the cave rises a glacier a hundred yards in height, an enormous towering wall of crystal, and here rises the great Ganges, that pours its waters through the burning plains of Hindostan far away below. It is said that the snow fields are of immense extent, sufficient to supply even such a river as rises here, while snow is constantly falling to add to it.

I do not know what you think about it, but when I first began to explore the ice rivers and

mountains, I felt how little, how very little we know of the mighty grandeur, and of the supreme wisdom of the works of God in them.

I felt that every fresh little bit of knowledge gained as to these works of God called forth the joy and praise of my heart ; for His children have a far greater interest in them than any one else could have. In a sense they belong to us, for it is the same as in earthly things, we call our father's house, or garden, or horses. ours, and every little child does the same.

As we look, then, at these mighty reservoirs, as we called them, locked up in the ice, and frost, and snow of the Alpine summits, and measured out as they are needed in the burning plains below, can we help being proud of the works of our Father—His mighty, glorious works, that the more we look at and search them out, draw forth our admiration and wonder ?

Some people seem to think it is waste of time to spend it in looking at stars, as they flash and twinkle above us, and they say the same as we climb the Alpine hills, and explore the fire mountains. But I do not feel at all sure that they are finding such cause to praise and reverence our

God, as we who thus see for ourselves something of His works.

Surely if He did not wish us to see them, and thus know His infinite power and glory, He would not have strewn the sky with the gleaming points above, nor girdled the earth with the mountains below.

So dear friends, let us keenly enjoy the mountain, the sky, and sea, because they reveal our Father's hand to us. Apart from that, they are only the beauties of a doomed world—a world of which Christ Himself said that God so loved it as to give His Son to die, that the sinner who believed in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Before we separate for to-day, I want us to get a peep at a very different scene from the source of the Ganges, so we pass over to a beautiful group of islands, lying not far from the African coast. We are at the Canaries now, and are going to get a glimpse of the great peak of Teneriffe.

These Canary islands used to be spoken of by the ancient writers as the abodes of bliss. They seemed to think this was the most perfectly lovely spot on earth, and gave them the cha-

racter of never having a storm anywhere near them.

We know now that all this was mere fable, but the Canaries are pleasantly situated, and the climate is delicious ; and as seen from the deck of an approaching vessel, they look like so many pleasant oases rising, crowned with laurels, pines, and beautiful vineyards, from the very brink of the waters.

This is more especially true of Teneriffe, with its vast mass rising like a pyramid, more than twelve thousand feet high. At sunset and sunrise it casts a deep shadow over the sea for fully fifty miles. I think that gives us an idea of its height more than anything ; at least, if we are at all accustomed to watch the shadows cast by trees, say across a plain or meadow. But a shadow stretching for mile after mile seems almost impossible, only we know it to be true.

Unlike some mountains, trees and verdure clothe the sides of Teneriffe, and take away the air of bleak desolation it must otherwise have. This, of course, is only on the lower slopes. As the traveller rises higher and higher, all the lovely

foliage disappears, and nothing but lava and pumice stone, and dusty bare rocks are met with.

The sky is like azure, and not a cloud ever to be seen, for one soon passes above them, and if there are any they float along the sides of the mountain much lower down. The ground burns beneath our feet, and we can well imagine the terror of this peak in long past ages, when from the crater at the summit the rivers of red-hot lava poured forth with showers of fiery dust and ashes ; for, as you know, we are now on an extinct volcano.

But there are places even near this burning region, where masses of the beautiful white broom grows in the ravines, and here flocks of goats are led to browse on the sweet tops of the broom ; and crowds of bees come too for the fragrant syrup, and without the blossoming broom I hardly know what the people of Teneriffe, in the south, would do, for rearing bees is one of their principal occupations. It may be you have had honey from there without knowing it, for they, no doubt, send much away to other lands.

Travellers who have gained the very summit of the peak, tell us that it is an intensely difficult



ascent. The lava beds and ashes, and loose soil make it next to impossible to proceed, so that they seem to slip back two steps for every one forward. Still it has been done, and it is thus we know that the mountain was once an active volcano, and the crater is of enormous size.

Most glad are we that no signs of fire escape from it now, and so there is no danger for the people who live at the base of it. From the top of the mountain the whole of the islands that form the group are plainly seen, so the view must be very grand.

Now we will descend, and end our mountain travels for to-day. From Nebo to Mount Carmel, and thence to the Himalayas and the Canaries! What a journey we have taken! I hope none of you will be too tired for our closing climb to-morrow, and then we shall have to separate.

I hope, too, we shall not do so without finding that we have learnt more than we knew when we began our travels among the mountains, of the love and grace and power of our heavenly Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. All our journeys will be in vain, all our toil useless, if we have not done that.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WHOLE EARTH FULL OF HIS GLORY.

“The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire.”—

*2 Kings vi. 17.*



ONCE more I want to take you to a mountain not far from the beautiful Mediterranean ; the sea that above all others comes into the story of the world's history. No other has had such scenes enacted on its shores, or seen the rise and fall of empires and nations as these purple-tinted waters have.

As we reach the land, and pass on to our mountain in Dothan, we get a glimpse of Carmel again in the distance, and would like to spend a few hours on its summit, that stands out like a sentinel on guard over the sea below it. But now

we go on to a little group of hills more inland, the name of which at once recalls the thought of Joseph wandering in the field in search of his brothers, and going after them to Dothan. So we are most likely on the same spot that Joseph remembered long after, as the place where he was so cruelly sold by his brothers.

He left his own land, and with the merchants who had bought him, went down into Egypt, and never saw his own home again. But he was taken care of through all ; and long and painful as the years of his slavery must have been, he seems never to have lost heart, or grown despairing, though he had left all that he loved behind him.

I do not suppose he cared much for any of his brothers except Benjamin, but he loved his father, and must have grieved at the sudden wrench from all he had known as long as he could remember anything. Dothan must have been a name he would never forget.

But in Joseph's case it tells us how God makes even such a thing as being stolen, and sold as a slave, to turn out for good to all ; and as we look at it later on, it still tells us that however trying and painful things may seem in our life, yet behind

it all God is looking at everything. We come down to Elisha's day, and it tells the same story, this mountain in Dothan.

The prophet was such a troublesome man to the Syrian king that he made up his mind to stop his prophesying, and so, to take him prisoner was the first thing ; but I should think he was afraid of Elisha, as he sends a whole host of his troops, with horses and chariots, to take this one man.

They go in the night, so as to be sure to catch the prophet ; and when his servant gets up in the morning and sees all the soldiers, he is very much afraid. For his sake Elisha asks his Lord that the eyes of his servant may be opened ; and then a grand sight must the young man have seen, for the whole mountain was full of fiery horses and chariots, as if ready to bear Elisha far away from the soldiers of Syria.

Elisha *knew* God would take care of him, and he did not ask that he might see the wonderful protectors that were all around him. He could trust to what he knew God was, without *seeing* how His care thought of and guarded him. I suppose his servant had not learnt this, or at least did not know enough to trust Him in the face

of such a host as he saw, that the Syrian king had sent to take them captive. Think of the goodness that opened his eyes to see the horses and chariots of fire. He would never forget such a sight, and it would strengthen his faith in God too.

We do not read that his master saw the wonderful sight ; but as he knew all along that not a soldier of the host of Syria could touch him unless God willed it, he would not be taken by surprise at the sight his young man saw. Now you may say to me, Yes, but that was a miracle, and there are no miracles now. Elisha, too, was a very great prophet, and the whole story is one of a special time, not such as we live in now.

Well, all that is true ; times have changed since then, and we are certainly not much like the faithful Elisha. But there is one great comfort, that if times and people have changed, the Lord has not ; so it is because He remains ever the same in His love and care of His own, that we know the same goodness will guard and keep us, if we are really His own.

The more we learn to know God, the more rest we shall have in times of darkness and trial. We

may have no special text or passage of His word to apply to our particular trial ; but it is because we know what our Lord is, that we know He will make all things work together for good to us.

I often feel keenly that it is because we do not know Him well enough that we are so troubled when a time of difficulty comes ; and come it must to all of us sooner or later, in one way or another.

When it comes to you, just think of the guardian care that is watching over you ; even if the trial comes from the mistakes or failure of others it is just the same.

David knew all this, and in speaking of men who troubled him, he said, “from men, *which are thy hand.*” He saw God’s hand in the troubles these men caused him. I think this is an immense help, because the truth is the same to-day ; and when a whole mountain of difficulties seem ready to crush us, let us remember that if our eyes were opened, we should see how God’s hand was over it, as it was in the day when the chariots and horses of fire were there for the servant to see.

But we must not look to be taken out of our trials. We see that it is much more God’s way to make His people able to bear them, and so He

strengthens them for it, or what could we say to the terrible trials of faith of His people even in later years, not to speak of those we read of in the word, who endured affliction even to death.

I think we can see this very plainly if we once more cross the sea from Dothan, and pass on to the north of Italy to the Alps of Piedmont. We go in at the grand portal, that stands like a giant doorway into the valley, and pass through miles of the grandest mountain scenery, until we reach the Castelluzzo, one of the most symmetrical and beautiful peaks in this region of mountains.

It is not its beauty that we think of now, for we remember that in the days when Cromwell ruled over England, the savage Duke of Savoy allowed the bigoted priests to condemn hundreds of his subjects to be dashed down the whole height of the fearful precipice, falling in mangled heaps at the base. Even mothers, with their little children, suffered this awful death rather than disobey God, and bow down and worship idols, for such it is to bow down to the host of the Roman Catholics, with their calendar of saints to be invoked and prayed to.

Milton was Secretary of State then, and by

Cromwell's orders he wrote to intercede for the persecuted Christians of Italy, and sent help to them also. And that Milton did not forget the cruel death of these Waldensian brethren, we have a proof in his touching lines "on the Massacre of Piedmont," as he called it, where he speaks of the

"Slaughter'd saints, whose bones  
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold."

And mistaken as we must feel Cromwell and Milton both were in their lives, yet we can see much in them that reveals to us that they were true believers in Christ, especially Milton. In their days they knew not the truth in its fulness as we know it now, but we often forget that.

Now we will pass on till we get once more within the shadow of Mont Blanc. There I want to shew you a very difficult pass, or, rather, one that was of great difficulty to those who made the attempt to cross it in the seventeenth century. It is called the Col de Bonhomme.

This pass gives the traveller one of the most varied and grand views even in these wonderful Alps. One side gives us the ranges of peaks towards France and Piedmont ; and the other side



Switzerland is as beautiful. But even so late as 1840 this pass was very dangerous in bad weather, and several travellers lost their lives there. It was by this pass that a band of the Waldenses, who had been exiled for their faith, returned to their ruined and deserted homes.

In the depth of winter they had been forced, by the Pope's orders, to leave their happy homes, and cross the mountains to the place of their banishment. Awful were the sufferings they endured, till, one after the other at first, and then in groups, they had to lie down in the snow to die. Not half of them lived to the end of the journey ; and the way they had come was strewn by their dead.

Fathers had to see their wives and daughters dragging themselves up the rugged rocks with bleeding feet and hands, till their last bit of hope and strength gave way, and they sank down on the ice, that was less cruel than their persecutors.

Mothers had to see their little children left dying, or dead, in the same way ; and at last a mere handful of the numbers who were driven from their homes, reached the town on the other side of the Alps, where they were to live. And

there, for some time, they did live. A band of skeletons they looked like, as they came down from their terrible journey; but even such trials are sometimes lived through, and so it was with these poor Waldenses who survived the journey.

But the memory of their Alpine homes clung to them. They longed for the mountains where they were born, and had always lived, and the close towns grew more and more distasteful to them. Death was the penalty of their being found in those loved homes they had been driven from; but it seemed as if life was little worth to them unless they could spend it there. So at last a band of them, under a brave leader, resolved to make their way back and try to regain their homes, and again people their deserted valleys.

It seemed as if God was with them too. The snow was knee-deep on this pass of the Col de Bonhomme, when they crossed it in torrents of rain, that made it still worse. Yet every one passed it in safety, and at last reached the place where four mighty peaks, or Aiguilles, as they are called, seem to rise up into the very clouds that generally hide their tops, and hang like a canopy over the valley below.

The feathery pine and fir trees grow here, and clothe the mountain of La Balsiglia, as it is called. And on the terraces of these noble peaks did the brave-hearted little band of Christians pitch their camp, and in a few weeks they were amid the frosts and ice of the long winter, with its bitter cold and wet.

After a time the French soldiers, who were occupied in destroying the Vaudois, who would not recant, discovered the place where they had sheltered themselves, and at once tried to drive them down, or shoot them where they were. Over and over again whole battalions were sent against them; but surely we may say the Hand that protected Elisha protected these of His children here, and so they were kept in safety. At last, as the severe winter set in, the French general gave up his attempt of conquering them until the following spring, and the poor refugees were left alone to struggle through the months as best they could.

Their once happy and busy villages lay close below them, and though at first they had gone back there, they had been obliged to fly from the savage soldiery who had found them out. So

they took up their abode on La Balsiglia, and the peaks daily re-echoed with their hymns, and prayers, and psalms. They had daily meetings for this purpose, and thus they encouraged each other to trust in the God of whom they read, and to whom their prayers went up.

During the little time they had been able to remain in their villages, before the troops found them, they had collected the store of chestnuts from their splendid forests, and all the other fruits that they could find had been most carefully put together, but they had no corn.

There had been some Roman Catholics also living in the valley, who fled when the little Vaudois band came back, fearing perhaps they would retaliate on them for the cruel sufferings inflicted by their popish rulers ; so it was found that they had left whole fields of ripened grain in the valley.

The snow began to fall very early that year, much earlier than usual ; and when the French came all they saw was the snow-covered fields. Little did they think when they destroyed the whole of the grain they could find in the valleys before they left, that a Power greater than man's

had provided a store that would keep His people supplied with food for months. But so it was, and from this strange granary the Vaudois drew their supplies week after week.

When they had all been driven from their homes, one of them had taken the stone from the little mill they had used to grind their corn, and flung it into one of the streams near. This they now searched for, and happily found it, and thus they were able to grind the grain drawn from its snowy storehouse. They occupied part of the winter in strengthening their rocky camping-place ; but as the days grew less cold, and winter began to give place to spring, they knew that the French would most likely come back, and try again to force them to leave the beautiful mountains.

I suppose we have little idea of the strong love these Alpine-born people have for their wild homes. The Swiss have often died to defend them, and it was the same with these Vaudois. Not very long ago I heard of an American lady and her friends, who were travelling in Switzerland, and she found that her guide had a son in America. She asked him if he would not like to go there too, it would be easier for him to live

there. But he shook his head, looked round him at the beloved mountains, and said, "No! I love Chamouni," his mountain home.

So as these hunted refugees began to think of what must be done to prepare for the French, who would most likely carry out their threat of coming again in the spring, they decided that they would risk everything rather than again leave the place where they had been born; and when the first of the French regiments appeared, they found them still on the lofty terraces of the mountain where they had passed the winter. To the dismay of the little band above them they had brought cannon now, knowing that they could, by these means, easily batter down the defences so hardly built up through the stormy days of the past winter; and a very few hours after the hostile troops had come within sight of them, their little camp was one heap of ruins.

The afternoon had passed before it was battered down, and the order was given for the men to prepare to spend the night there, and wait till the daylight next morning before doing any more of their savage work; but before the darkness came a dense fog hid the prey that the soldiers felt

so sure of. Down swept the mist from the huge peak behind the fugitives, where not even the Vaudois dared attempt the ascent.

The valley beneath swarmed with their foes, and the only way of escape lay almost in their midst. A steep path, full in sight and reach of the French, was the only path to the mountains where they might yet elude them.

As the mist swept down into the valley, and reached the enemies' camp, and then, after a time, became so dense that not even their camp fires could be seen by the watchers on La Balsiglia, they prepare to creep along the narrow path through the valley, in the midst of their enemies.

It was their last hope, and trusting to the Hand that had cast the dark veil of thick mist, as if to shelter His trembling ones, the Vaudois stealthily crept down. Great care was needed, for a sound would betray them ; but one by one they passed along, hearing the jokes and laughter of the men, who were so sure that the morrow would see all the hated refugees in their hands. They little knew that only a few yards away these were stealing along the crags up to a steeper and safer place of refuge.

The fog lasted for hours ; the whole band of them got across the valley in safety ; and when the sun rose the next morning, and lit up the ruins of the deserted camp, the French were surprised to see no sign of life there.

When at last the order was given, and they ascended to the spot, we can imagine their dismay as they found their prey had escaped them ; and looking round at the neighbouring peaks, far up in the distance, they could see a long line of figures surmounting heights, that were only passable to mountaineers. Then they saw that the Waldenses were safe, at least, for the time ; so in angry surprise they left the valley, and were soon employed in fighting battles that made them forget La Balsiglia.

The wanderers had still some weeks or months of wandering in search of a home ; and when at last they again ventured into their own valleys, they were met by a message from the Duke of Savoy, giving them the privilege to return to their homes, under certain conditions.

So at last they were again free to enter the half ruined cottages, and recall the wives and children who had not perished. Free to plant



and reap their fields, where, for hundreds of years, their forefathers had treasured up the sacred word of God, while nations on every hand were worshipping senseless blocks of wood and stone.

There the descendants of these Vaudois still live ; but I am sorry to say, that the faith that burned so brightly and clearly in the midst of trial and persecution, grew dim in easier times, and more than one of their villages have apparently given up the truth. But we can thank God for what He did for them in the past, and learn a lesson, too, of endurance in the story of this little band on La Balsiglia.

We have now just time for a glance at the grand heights of some of the Pyrenees. Everybody, of course, knows that they form a barrier between France and Spain ; but we may not all know how many grand heights lie among this range. Many, if not all, of the highest peaks are snow-capped ; but almost directly below the snow line we may see green forests of chestnut and beech, mingled with the oak, and the blue-green of the dark pines.

Down some of the deep glens a roaring torrent makes the din of its waters echo back from the

rocks. Here we may come to a sort of table land, closed in by dark rocks, that throw a deep shadow upon the grassy floor below, while higher up the mountains there are vast snow-fields and glaciers as grand as even the Swiss heights can shew.

One pass, called "Gavarnie," has a road cut in the rock, that astonishes every one who sees it, and makes them wonder at the daring that has thrown this path, as it were, over giddy heights and past precipices, where one grows dizzy at the sight below.

There is a vast cataract, and the river Gave roars and dashes its waves against the rocky channel, sometimes crossed by this wonderful road, which seems to rise and sink with the mountains, sometimes passing along a naked wall of rock, and everywhere wide enough to be perfectly safe in the midst of the wildest scenery. This forms the communication between Spain and France in this part of the country.

But we must say good-bye to the Pyrenees, and take one look at an Indian volcano. I ought rather to say a volcano in the Indian Archipelago.

You know how beautiful these islands are, and it is in Java that there are peaks that rival even

Mont Blanc in height, that are neither tipped with snow, nor bare and bleak on their slopes. In Java alone there are said to be no less than forty-five volcanoes, not ruins of lava and ashes, but clothed from top to bottom in the most lovely fruits and flowers ; so that to climb a mountain here gives one range after range of rich landscapes, different from any others that I know of.

Most of you like blackberries ; but what do you think of luscious raspberries growing wild here, and as plentiful as blackberries at home, and climbing to the very top of the immense peak of Pangerango? Honeysuckle, too, is constantly seen, and the giant cowslip, much like our own cowslip, except in size. This grows here nearly a yard in height, and the flowers are very large.

The ferns, too, are so numerous and beautiful it is quite bewildering. How came these beautiful flowers here? Then I had forgotten the strawberries, though they are not worth much, being rather tasteless ; but the bananas are splendid.

All these are found growing wild on these extinct fire mountains. Ah ! God clothes the desolate places of the world, and the dreary mountains with life and beauty ; and He can, and

will, do the same with the dreary places, or the mountain loneliness of our lives. Only let Him take them and mould them as He will, and then something will be built up that will stand the fire of the day that is coming. We are all building, you know. We have to see how we are doing it.

“For the buildings that we raise,  
 Time is with materials fill'd ;  
 Our to-days and yesterdays,  
 Are the blocks with which we build.”

And now our journeys amongst the mountains are over. If only they do for you what they have done for me, I shall not feel that they have been in vain ; and I almost wish we could have spent a longer time amongst them, and seen some of the many that we have not glanced at. But Mary is asking what these journeys have done for me ?

Well, to begin with, they taught me at once how little I really knew of the mighty works of our God. They shewed me a grandeur and glory in His works on the very rocks we tread on, that I had never thought much of before. They have shewn me, too, His love and care in the scenes that passed on some of the mountains.

They make me rejoice at Ararat, and Moriah, in the knowledge of sin and self put away for ever ; and the others all speak of wondrous lessons to be learnt by any who will be taught. I can, therefore, say to you that “ The voice of God is on the mountains if you will listen to it ;” and as we have wandered across countries

“ Where fur-clad hunters wander  
 Amidst the snow and ice ;  
 Where through the sand of morning land,  
 The camel bears the spice ;”

we see everywhere that One mighty Power is ruler over all. Mountain and valley, land and sea bear traces everywhere of His powerful Hand. And surely we cannot help praising Him, whom we own as our Saviour God ; and seeing, too, that

“ Earth with her thousand voices praises God.”

L. T.

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