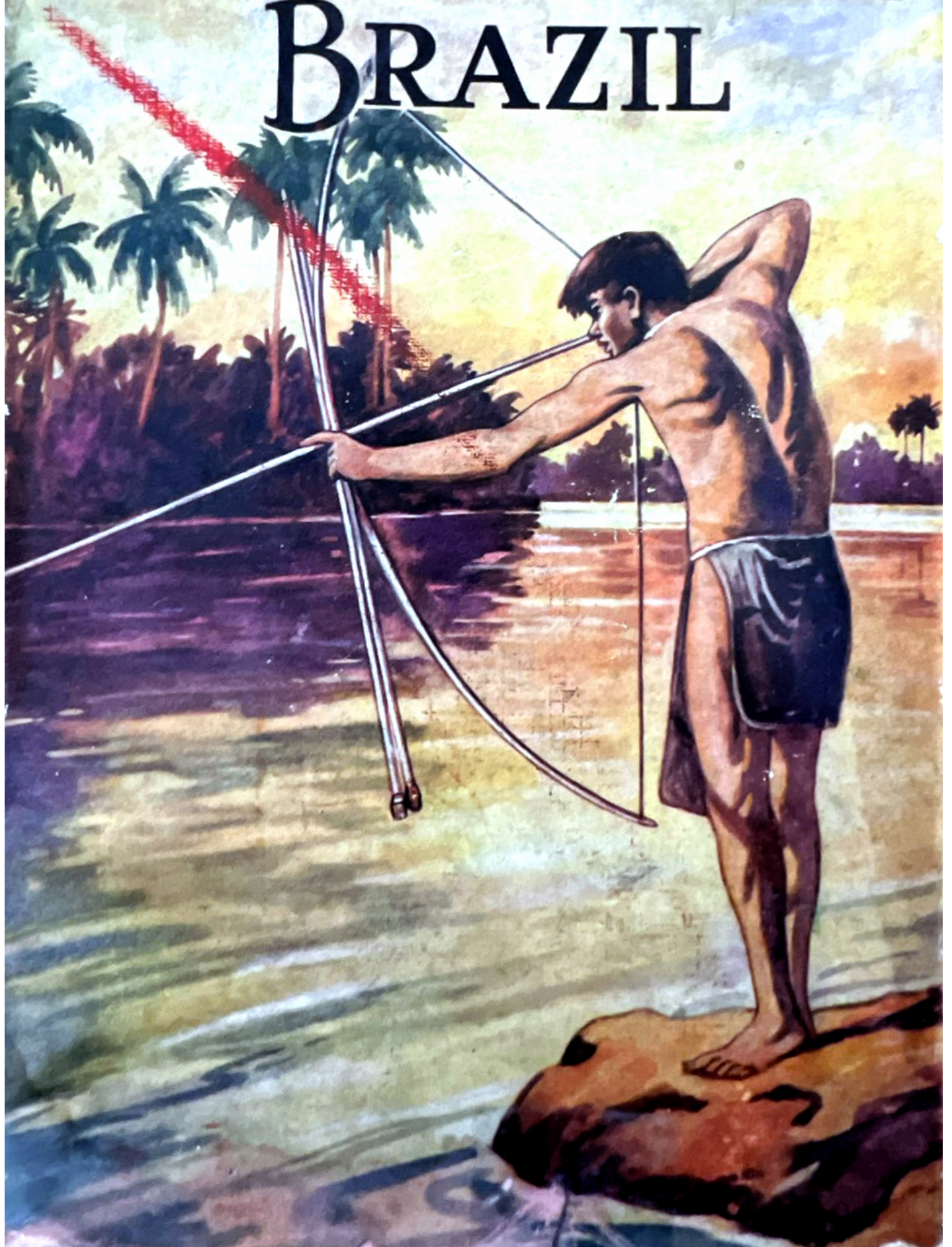


STORIES FROM BRAZIL





WILLIAM ANGLIN.

STORIES FROM BRAZIL

BY
WILLIAM ANGLIN



PICKERING & INGLIS
LONDON GLASGOW EDINBURGH

LONDON - - 14 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.4
GLASGOW - - 229 BOTHWELL STREET, C.2
EDINBURGH - 29 GEORGE IV BRIDGE, 1

Stories from Brazil

MANY of the stories narrated in this book have already appeared in print in the magazine—"WORK IN MANY LANDS." Suggestions were made that the articles should have a wider circulation and be brought together into one volume, hence the reason for publishing them in this form. The author trusts that the reading of these pages may stimulate interest and prayer for the Lord's work in Brazil, and that the simple stories of conversion may serve to give a fresh sense of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the wonderful power of the Gospel.

It will be noticed that in many cases the Holy Spirit's work in the soul was first effected by the reading of the Word of God, apart from any preaching or explanation. When the work has begun, the soul seeks further light and to have the Word expounded more perfectly.

Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THREE CELEBRATIONS	11
II. ITINERATING IN BRAZIL	22
III. HOW A WOULD-BE MURDERER WAS CON- VERTED THROUGH THE "MAN-IN-THE-MOON"	29
IV. THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY	33
V. PARDON AND PEACE	36
VI. A BRAND FROM THE BURNING,	39
VII. THE OLD BIBLE	44
VIII. JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN	50
IX. JOSEPH AND HIS NEIGHBOURS,	53
X. SPIRITISM	55
XI. THE DEMON-POSSESSED YOUNG MAN,	57
XII. FIRE AND BRIMSTONE VERSUS INCENSE,	60
XIII. A STRANGE CONVERSION	62
XIV. THE CONFERENCE,	67
XV. MULETEERS AND HORSE THIEVES	75
XVI. THE MAN IN THE MUD,	80
XVII. BRAZILIAN COFFEE FARMERS,	84
XVIII. PRIESTS	91

Illustrations

WILLIAM ANGLIN, -	- -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
		PAGE
A WEEK-DAY GOSPEL SERVICE FOR CHILDREN,	16	
CONCEIÇÃO, - - - - -	17	
A FARM HOUSE IN THE CAMPO DE MINAS,	- 64	
AFTER THE PREACHING, - - - - -	64	
CAMPING OUT, - - - - -	65	
TRAVELLING IN BRAZIL, - - - - -	65	
CASA DE ORAÇÃO, AND BIBLE SCHOOL, BARREIRO, - - - - -	80	
FARMHOUSE OF SR. LUIZ LOURENÇO, - -	80	
FARMHOUSE OF THE CONVERTED MURDERER, SR. NAPHTALI, - - - - -	81	
A BRAZILIAN VILLAGE, - - - - -	81	

Introduction

THE work of the Lord described in these chapters has sprung up within a single generation, and for the most part in the country places of Brazil, away from towns and cities. Although there have been two or three English workers visiting the congregations, which are scattered over a large area, these cannot be regarded as a product of their work. The churches are indigenous, self-contained, self-sustained, and self-controlled. The missionary has no ecclesiastical authority, and he does not, and desires not to dominate these numerous congregations. These churches are scattered over thousands of square miles, but have no organization or central authority. They have no denominational title, and the believers are quite content with the goodly assortment of titles the New Testament affords them, which are common to all believers, and do not take unto themselves titles not found

in the Word of God with which to distinguish or divide them from other believers.

The name common to all believers in Brazil is the word "crentes," which means "believers." Meeting-houses are commonly called by the Portuguese words, "Casa de Oraçãõ."

The local assemblies are on primitive church lines, "continuing in the apostle's doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers." The Scriptures of Truth are the first and last word in all matters pertaining to the kingdom of God, and that authority settles every question. When the local church contains men capable of preaching (and most have several) the Gospel is carried to various points around. When these outposts become sufficiently strong, they usually build a "Casa de Oraçãõ" (Meeting Hall). These in turn become fresh centres from which the light of the Gospel radiates. The work of the missionary is to visit, teach, preach, instruct, counsel, and encourage. His authority is moral and spiritual, and not ecclesiastical nor in any way dependent on his nationality. His usefulness is according to his ability to expound the Scriptures, to preach the Gospel, to help on

the believers, and to counsel them in any difficulty. He seeks to teach the believers their own responsibility in the local church, and to guard them from strange or extravagant doctrines, from errors in teaching or practice, and from intolerance in minor matters. He teaches them to maintain a catholic spirit, and to realise that the communion of saints, means *all* saints. They, on the other hand often give him very practical lessons in Christian love, and especially in the true significance of the Scriptural expression, "given to hospitality," for he is a very welcome, though not frequent visitor to many congregations.

STORIES FROM BRAZIL

CHAPTER I.

Three Celebrations

- (1) A birthday celebration—a Gospel meeting with a thunderstorm for a background.
- (2) A Christmas Day celebration—a Gospel meeting followed by a murder.
- (3) A New Year's Day celebration—a Gospel meeting with a burglary behind the scenes.

A Birthday Celebration.

I AM invited to preach in a farm-house four or five miles from home, to celebrate the seventeenth birthday of a daughter of the house. The Brazilian usually celebrates such occasions by dancing. Dancing, however, is not practised amongst the believers, so a Gospel meeting is sometimes substituted, and followed by a feast.

I start off in the evening of the day appointed, with a native brother, who is also a preacher. It is growing dusk, but there is a weird feeling in the air, a continual roll of thunder, and the stifling atmosphere seems to be charged with electricity, accompanied by a curious subdued light, increasing and diminishing. As we draw near to the house the growls of the thunder

get louder, the lightning becomes more vivid, and a sudden cold blast announces the arrival of the storm. We hurry to our destination, dismount, get our horses quickly under cover, unharness as much as possible by the light of the flashes, and then rush into the house as the rain begins in real earnest. The guests have already arrived, and the house is full of folk, mostly young people. Such a storm is very awe-inspiring, and we linger to have a look out now that we are sheltered. The lightning is dazzling, almost continuous, and in every direction, making the countryside appear as in daylight for a second or two, followed by pitch blackness, to be quickly relieved by another flash. The rattle of "heaven's artillery," is like a continuous discharge, varying in intensity from a rumble to a terrific crash. The roof of the house, though better than many, cannot keep out all the rain, and it is soon dripping through the crevices, and during the meeting it sprinkles the preacher's head and Bible.

All the available backless forms are brought in, boxes are placed at intervals to support the planks placed across them in order to increase the seating accommodation. This house, being that of a fairly well-to-do man, possesses a table. In poorer houses, wooden boxes form the principal furniture. The boxes are made into tables (bottom upwards with four legs fastened on) seats, wheel-barrows, trunks for household valuables, or wash-stands

for missionaries who do not like washing in public at the water-trough outside of the house. The company fills the room and overflows into the kitchen. They are mostly young, and the spotlessness of the dress of both sexes makes a contrast with the sombre surroundings. The only light in the house is from some very small oil lamps, or flares, which emit more smoke than anything else. The female sex in the country places of Brazil, whether young or old, have not yet learned to make themselves frightful with lip-stick and "bobbing," as they have done in the towns. Their immaculate dresses, too, are quite becoming. All being seated, we begin the meeting with some singing of hymns and choruses.—just exactly the same tunes as used in England in Sunday Schools or evangelistic meetings. After prayer, our native brother begins to speak to an attentive audience, to the accompaniment of thunder, and the rattle of the rain on the roof overhead, for there is no ceiling. I follow with a message on the same lines, and we close with more singing and prayer for the Gospel, for the household, and especially for a blessing on the daughter whose wish it had been to celebrate her birthday thus with a Gospel meeting. Many of the girl's friends and neighbours would not perhaps care to attend an ordinary meeting, but to a birthday party they feel more attracted, and custom here rather demands an acceptance of such an invitation.

After the preaching, the table is covered

with good things, chiefly very sweet things that the foreigner has probably never before seen, and also various kinds of cake-stuff that he believes he recognizes. This is accompanied by tiny cups of black coffee, both nice and necessary with so much sweet-stuff. The meal is eaten in almost solemn silence, though things liven up somewhat when it is over and we are gone. After the meeting and some conversation, we have to face the storm on our return home. Many guests stay the night at the farm-house, which appears to have unlimited capacity, and the farmer to have unlimited hospitality. I am invited to remain, but prefer to brave the storm under the circumstances, as there are so many guests, and all shutters are closed. When our horses are ready, we set out, but my animal refuses to go forward whilst I am mounted, being blinded by the flashes of lightning, so that he cannot see in the interval of darkness. I have therefore to dismount and the horse has to be led. We borrow a lantern and set out to walk. The little stream near the house is a raging torrent, but we have to walk through it. The steep roads have also torrents of water running down them and are very slippery, whilst the rain descends upon us like a shower-bath. After a couple of miles the lantern flickers and goes out. One can now only move forward during the lightning flashes which are getting less frequent. We struggle along slowly, our garments getting heavier every minute and

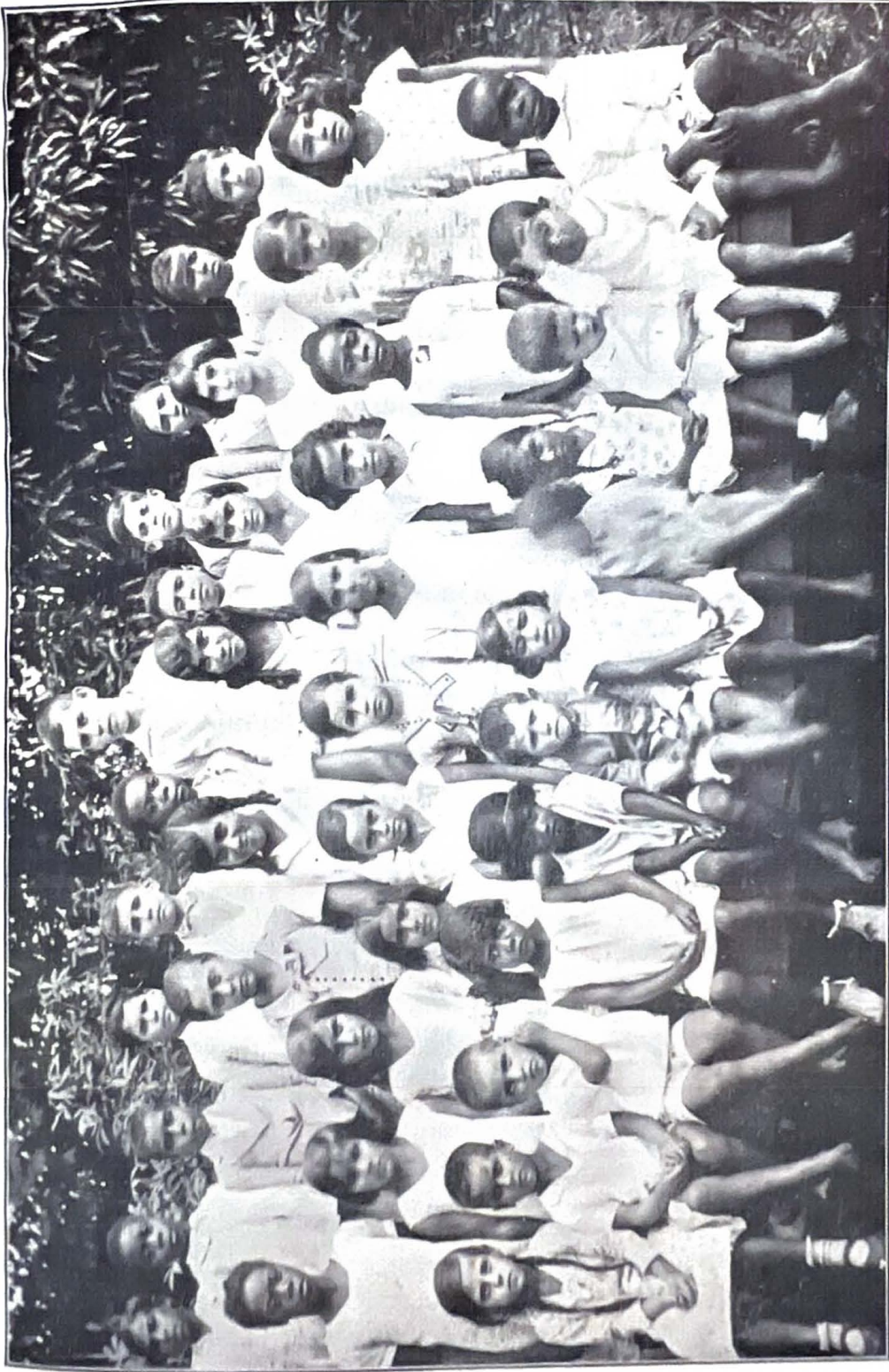
the wet penetrating more and more. We call at a farm-house and obtain more paraffin for our lamp, and light up again. We now proceed more happily, arriving home gladly, but very very damp.

A Christmas Day Celebration.

Eight miles from my house is the town of D——, noted chiefly for its wickedness and leprosy. I accepted an invitation to hold a Gospel meeting in a small farm-house a little beyond the town, on Christmas Day. These holidays and Saint's days are regarded as good occasions for gathering together the neighbours to hear the Gospel. This farmer is anxious to have his neighbours converted, though he himself has not been a believer for very long. I accordingly went on Christmas Eve, and we improved the occasion by an informal meeting with a few neighbours, at which we sang some hymns and had a short Bible reading. For the singing one needs a throat of brass and lungs like leather. After these exercises, a bed was made up for me on a trestle in the same room where we had held the meeting. Next day, Christmas Day, I arose at the first streak of dawn, and dressed, but found that, unfortunately, my wash-basin had been left behind. I had therefore to go out in a drizzling rain and wash at the spout behind the house. The "spout" is a channel made of bamboo leading from some stream, and conveying the water to a trough placed near the house. After

I had finished these ablutions, I called mine host and explained that Englishmen shaved every day, and that I needed a basin to perform the operation indoors. He was very sorry that he had not got such a thing. He explained that he himself shaved but once a fortnight. I had already suspected it. He then brought me a cup, and when I began to shave, he called his wife to come and watch me, the rest of the family being already interested spectators. I performed the task successfully, and was relieved when it was over.

At half-past six we went out to invite the neighbours to the mid-day meeting. At nine o'clock they began to arrive and by eleven the room was full, nearly all being unconverted people. We sang some choruses, which are better than hymns, because some cannot read and but few have hymn books. At mid-day we began the preaching, and I spoke as simply and plainly as I could, and the attention was excellent. A Brazilian preacher who had arrived, followed on, and after more singing we closed the meeting, and a little later I set out for home. On the way I took a cup of coffee at the house of my fellow-preacher who lives in the town, and then proceeded alone. I was then new to the road, and have no gift for path-finding amongst so many hills, turns and by-paths. At the last shop before leaving the town I inquired the way, and the owner pointed it out to me. A little further on I asked another man standing at a cross-roads,



A WEEK-DAY GOSPEL SERVICE FOR CHILDREN—BLACK AND WHITE, CLEAN AND BRIGHT.



CONCEIÇÃO. (Note the man's face when photo is held upright.)

and he deliberately misled me, going in front for a mile, and then turned off, after telling me to continue on the same road. This came to an end at a house and steep hill-side. I had to pull my reluctant horse over a mountain in the rain, which had come on, through a forest track, and down the other side, slippery and steep. At last I regained the right road, but had another mountain to surmount and descend ere I reached home.

To return to the shopkeeper who had informed me as to the right road; shortly after this, he started out to attend a meeting in the town. The rain came on and he took shelter at the house of my fellow-preacher, who is a relative, and soon after, meeting a local doctor who had attended his family, he shot him with a revolver. The doctor ran wounded into a cinema but the murderer chased him, and fired again several times as he lay on the ground. The police had difficulty in saving him from being lynched, as the doctor was very popular. The only reason for this murder was that the doctor had sent in an account for his services, and later a strong letter demanding payment. The man considered himself to be insulted and thus took revenge. He was afterwards visited in prison and professed to be repentant and asked us to pray for him. His repentance was like that of many others, because of the consequences and not the crime. He hoped that by bribery and influence he might be liberated, and his lawyer assured

him that he would be liberated if sufficient money were forthcoming. His trial was delayed so that feeling against him would subside. He celebrated the anniversary of his crime with a few hours liberty under police escort to bury the son who had lent the revolver and incited him to do the deed. He was tried, acquitted by a jury, and later re-tried with the same result. He is now at liberty and carrying on his business in the town where he committed the crime, which is now referred to as his "misfortune." As to his "repentance," he is said to be threatening another similar crime.

A New Year's Day Celebration.

In the Casa de Oração in the valley of Conceição, we hold a special Gospel service on the first day of the year, and invite all our neighbours to attend. The believers live within a radius of about four or five miles from the hall.

We are a highly respectable Assembly in Conceição. Most wear, or endure, boots for Sunday and special meetings, though often they are quietly slipped off under the form during the service. Many of our forms, too, have backs, which gives an air of comfort which is much realized if the session is a long one. The aisle, as is usual, divides the sexes. The women-folk enter by a side-door, and fill one side of the hall, with the younger portion of the family, for not a

“hoof” (a most juvenile member of the family) is left behind. The men enter by the front door, and fill the other side of the hall. For prayer, all stand up. The women do not wear head-dress except when taking a long journey by horse or train. The Christian women wear a veil or put a handkerchief on their heads during the meeting. In less civilized places the forms have no back, and the painful ceremony of boot-wearing is dispensed with.

On this particular occasion we had visited the neighbourhood and invited the people to attend. At midday the hall was crowded, the neighbours having responded well to the invitations. We had three preachers and a very attentive audience. Generally speaking, the first meeting does not have much effect upon a new-comer, though it leaves a favourable impression which may dispose him to return. The work of salvation is of God, but it is blended in a most extraordinary way with human means and circumstances. Human instincts and training appear to be such hindrances, that a mere listening to the words of the Gospel for a short time, seems to be futile. When, however, conversion has taken place, the effects show that there has been a divine work, and the Brazilian believer is generally a bright contrast to his unconverted neighbours. There are two families here in Conceição, the mother of each being a staunch Roman Catholic who will not come near a

Gospel meeting, and who at first were very bitter against the "Protestants." Some of the members of these two families are now converted, one being superintendent of the local Sunday School, others still follow the "old faith." One of these mothers quite recently presented her Catholic son with a New Testament which she had somehow mistaken for a good book full of good religious precept, that would confirm his faith in the "one true Church." He read it, and became greatly interested, and then converted, and joined himself to the local Assembly of believers. His mother was full of consternation, but could not rectify her "mistake." Although she was very angry, some saw a humorous side to the case. The two mothers prefer their own religion, although they admire the lives of their converted children more than the lives of their "faithful" sons and daughters.

The lady who made the mistake with the Testament always stoutly declares her intention of living and dying in the religion of her forefathers. Her husband has leanings towards the Gospel, but dreads the wrath of his wife, too much, to show any signs of turning.

During this New Year's Day meeting my house was entered and robbed. I discovered that my visitor had taken my purse and other good things. The burglar proved to be the waster son of a Christian farmer in the neighbourhood. I thought it advisable in the interests of the Gospel to say as little as possible

about the matter, as these interests are more valuable than money and goods. His wife is a Catholic, a daughter of one of the aforesaid Catholic mothers. Both the wife and her mother would be ashamed of the matter. The burglar has brought great sorrow and shame to his wife, yet both she and her mother would prefer him to be an evil liver rather than to be a believer. Such is the deeply rooted prejudice and enmity to the Gospel.

CHAPTER II

Itinerating in Brazil

SOME of the readers of these pages might like to take a mental ride with the writer, visiting some of the places of interest in the "roça" (cultivated country parts) of Brazil. For the purpose of this journey, the writer will be hereinafter known as the Preacher.

The Preacher is mounted on a horse, carrying leather saddle-bags containing his kit for the journey. He is accompanied by a native brother (not burdened with any luggage) who serves as guide or servant, and may possibly be from the last stopping-place. He starts out after breakfast, and journeys on until late in the afternoon, travelling for twenty to forty miles in the tropical sun, over hills, down dales, passing coffee-farms, through forests, crossing streams and rivers, negotiating mud-holes until at about 4 p.m. he arrives at the next stopping-place. The arrival is announced by four or five dogs which rush out as though to devour horses and men, barking furiously, until a small boy comes and orders them back, at which they retire with their

tails between their legs, and forthwith recognise the new-comers as friends. This house, let us say, is that of a farm-worker. It is made of a rough frame-work of wood, with clay walls and clay floor. The furniture consists of seats made of blocks of wood; and trestles with planks laid on top, serve as the best beds. Other beds are made of straw mats which will be laid on the ground when the proper hour arrives for the weary to rest. If the owner of the house is accustomed to hold meetings there, he will probably have also a couple of backless forms, and possess a box on legs to act as a table. The seating accommodation is amplified by resting planks on blocks of wood or on boxes.

Having dismounted from the horses (which are unharnessed, groomed, given a feed of maize, and led to the pasture by a son of the house) we (the Preacher and company) enter the house, and the father, mother, and possibly a dozen children advance to shake hands, including the eighteen months old child, whilst the baby, a year younger, carried by an older sister, is made to extend his arm and shake hands.

After a time, we are each given a small cup of black coffee. The evening meal or dinner will take about two hours to prepare, the family having already dined. This meal consists of three items, black beans, rice and a tasteless porridge made from flour of maize, and named "angu." The first two are

mixed with pig-fat and the latter lacks salt. The same menu serves for the two daily meals. When all is ready, we are invited to enter the kitchen, which is usually the largest apartment. The fireplace has no chimney and some of the smoke goes out through a hole in the wall made for the purpose, the rest wanders over the house or rises to the roof and lazily disappears. The result is that the rafters have festoons of blackened cobwebs, and soot adheres to the wooden tiles. The head of the house gives thanks for the food, and then the guests are invited to step up to the fire-place and help themselves to the good things directly from the pots. The fire-place is a long tunnel with a plate on top with holes for each of the pots. Wood is the fuel and burns under the plate, and if freshly put on, the guests' eyes have to smart for it. Each ladles out the three essentials on to an enamelled plate, and armed with a very soft fork, retires to a wooden block, and sitting thereon with plate on the knees, proceeds to enjoy his dinner. The dogs (now close friends), perhaps some cats, certainly a number of hens, and at times some pigs "lie at the catch," and when aught overflows, there is a scramble. The competition is keener if there should happen to be a little black pork added to the menu.

Before the meal is over, the folk are gathering in for the meeting. The ladies all make for the kitchen, and join the family in watching

the guests eat their dinner. The greasy repast being over, coffee is handed round in little cups, which makes the guests truly thankful.

One or two tiny lamps are lighted which give much smoke and a dim light. The forms and planks are arranged for the meeting. The room and every part of the house is filled with folk, many of whom have come several miles. The first part of the meeting is taken up with singing hymns or teaching a new chorus until all are present. All who arrive shake hands with all who arrived before them, not omitting the smallest child, and often repeat the process on going away. If there are fifty folk, each of the new-comers, including the preacher, will have to shake hands fifty times. After a prayer, for which all stand up, the preaching begins. The lamp gives a poor light, and the smoke of it torments the preacher at times. The atmosphere is warm and more suited to perspiration than respiration, but these disadvantages are often forgotten as the preacher warms to his subject. The people listen attentively but the preacher realises their ignorance, and inability to take in much. The preaching has to be of a very simple homely sort. What is the result? Can such a simple talk have any effect? Humanly speaking, to expect that a meeting will have much effect, would seem foolish. One has to remember that the Gospel is the Power of God, and the changed lives of such as our host and others, are the proofs of the

power. As this is realised, one feels that it is worth while to go on sowing the seed, carrying the message over vale, and hill, rejoicing to be a bearer of "Glad tidings of good things."

The meeting closes with a hymn and prayer, and then there is a very long pause. It will probably take over half an hour before the last one leaves the house, after shaking hands. Then the Preacher is shown to his bedroom. He is fortunate if it possesses a door. He sleeps on a straw mattress placed upon boards, all too short. If he has only to endure the hardship of the bed, he will be fortunate, for there are often a host of underlying annoyances, over which we must draw the bed cover. Morning comes, and the preacher rises at dawn, and unless he has brought a wash-basin, he must perform his ablutions at a trough behind the house, and shave before an admiring crowd. Coffee, and then ample time before the first meal. This is a repetition of last night's. After this the family have "culto domestico" (family worship). For this they take down the text calendar, which also gives the reference for the Scripture Union portions. This is read, all the family standing round, and the passage is commented on, and then the head of the house prays.

The horses have been harnessed and are ready, so the preacher, after a brief prayer, says good-bye to the family, mounts and rides away.

After a long journey, the next stop, let us say, is at a large farm-house of a well-to-do

farmer. If luxury is expected, it is not realised. We enter the front "sala," a large room with two huge backless forms, bare wooden floors, bare whitewashed walls, that need rewashing. The one ornament is the calendar, or perhaps there may be one or two advertisements on the walls, all placed crookedly. The dining-room has a long table and a backless form at each side. Here in due course we dine, that is the men folk and guests, and the ladies wait for the leavings, of which they partake in the kitchen. We have the same dishes as yesterday, but probably a fatted fowl has been added. We then have coffee, after wiping our mouths on the table-cloth.

We then go back to the front sala where they are preparing for the meeting. The room may hold over seventy people, and will be packed in every available corner. The farmer may produce a better lamp with a broken glass chimney, and the room is more airy than last night's. At times we call where there is a Casa de Oração (Meeting Hall) and in that case the meeting will be held there, which is still more commodious. So the work proceeds, though the visits of the Preacher cannot be very frequent. The Gospel spreads more through native preaching, which though not usually very gifted, is more constant. Everywhere there is an "open door."

On visiting places where there are established Meetings, the Preacher is often consulted about local difficulties. Whilst his advice is

by no means binding, it is treated with respect. It is best for the local brethren to act on their own faith and responsibility, but they require helping with advice. They have the Holy Spirit to guide them, but by means of the Word, of which they are often very ignorant. The Preacher has more knowledge of the Scriptures, and more experience, and can often restrain the believers by his advice from some foolish or unscriptural step. It is always best to point them to the Word as their guide, explaining what the Scriptures say, and they are usually willing to follow its guidance.

CHAPTER III

How a Would-be Murderer was Converted
through the "Man in the Moon"

I WAS travelling on horse-back over a high pass between two mountains on the way to a meeting, with a Brazilian guide, who is also an active Gospel preacher. I asked him to tell me how he was converted, and he willingly told me the following interesting story.

The name of my friend is Prudenciano. He had arranged with another man that they should together murder a mutual enemy, and agreed upon the time and place. The hour was to be late at night, and accordingly Prudenciano set out alone for the rendezvous, in the moonlight. It was a clear night and full moon. When one is going to do a dark deed, too much light is a great inconvenience, so thought Prudenciano, and the moon overhead troubled him. He had to pass over open ground, and heartily wished that the moon would not shine quite so brightly. Looking up at it from time to time, there was the "man-in-the-moon," as it appeared to be, watching with his two great eyes, and

the would-be murderer began to feel very uncomfortable. The watcher, however, kept up the stare, and showed no signs of hiding his face behind a cloud. Prudenciano began to think, and to flag. If the man-in-the-moon made him feel so uncomfortable, what about God? Surely He was watching. The idea of God looking on, and taking note, had not before occurred to him. Soon he felt he could go no further, and slowly went back home. There he got out of sight of the "man-in-the-moon," but the thought that God was ever watching all his movements began to haunt him. He thought of other misdeeds he had committed, and these began now to trouble him. He had in the house a book of prayers, and began to read and repeat them, but obtained no relief from these exercises. He also possessed a New Testament which he now set himself to study closely. He read on until he came to the verse in Mark 16. 16. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." This brought peace to his soul. Soon after this he heard of Gospel meetings where the Book was explained, and to these he went with great eagerness. He now preaches the Gospel, travelling round for leagues, taking the Message to the many centres around his home.

The other week, when visiting Prudenciano's meeting, I was on the way to the "Casa de Oração" with a brother who was my host for the time being, when a man on horseback

came up and shook hands most cordially with us both. After he had gone I asked mine host if that man was a believer. He replied, "Oh, no, in fact the other week he murdered a neighbour near here."

"Why?"

"Oh, they had a quarrel about something or other."

"Do the police know?"

"Oh, yes."

"Why don't they come and take him, then?"

"They will do so when they have arranged a jury to try him."

"But won't he run away meanwhile?"

"No, they think not, the man is so sure of the justice of his cause, that he prefers to see it through."

So we went to the meeting. With neighbours like that man, I have often thought on looking round upon the believers, of the power of the Gospel, for I see there a solid proof of it—all brought to God by different means, yet all through the Same Means.

In another part, I heard of a family converted through another rather strange circumstance. A man was presented with a Bible, and being angry, he threw it into the pig-sty. Next morning when he went to feed his pigs, he found them all dead. In dismay, he took out the Bible, thinking that it was the judgment of God upon him for his wickedness in thus treating God's Book. The result was

that he and the family began to read the Bible, and this led to their conversion. This story I heard from a believer who lived in the neighbourhood, but had not the opportunity of enquiring as to details, though the truth of it I have since had confirmed. I did enquire, however, as to what the covers of the Bible had been made of, and was told that the covers remained intact, as the Bible had not been touched by the pigs, so the reason of their decease remains a mystery. It proves that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and the conversion of Prudenancio shows that still God "chooses things which are not" to fulfil His purpose.

CHAPTER IV

The Heart of Christianity

DONA VERONICA was born in Piedmont in the north of Italy. Here she attended a convent school, and the good sisters tried to persuade her to become a nun. To this she felt somewhat inclined, but her family was obliged to emigrate to Brazil. Here after a few years she married a respectable, religious man (a Brazilian), and they bought some land and settled down to farm-life. Dona Veronica had ten children whom she brought up strictly and with more care and firmness than are most Brazilian families. She greatly feared the evils abounding on every hand, but was almost more afraid of the "protestant religion," which she believed was a kind of atheism, a religion of the Devil, and a terrible heresy. She had a book that she diligently read, which was written for good Catholics, a Bible history, a mixture of true and apocryphal stories.

One day, her eldest son, Joseph, went to play the guitar at a party, at which there was a feast, followed by dancing. Two girls, who were believers, attended the feast, but took no part in the dancing, and one of them greatly

attracted Joseph (so much so, that she is now his wife). Between the music and dancing they talked to Joseph of the Gospel, and advised him to procure a Bible, and read it for himself. This advice, coming from such very attractive people, appealed to the young man, and he bought a Bible at the first opportunity, and soon became very interested in it. He went to live in a village to learn book-keeping, and then entered a business. In this village there were regular Gospel meetings, and our friend began to attend them, and was soon a believer.

On visiting home, he began to evangelise his mother, but she was shocked at his new ideas, and told him that he was but a child, and that she knew better than he did, for was she not brought up in the very heart of Christianity—Italy? Joseph retired, disappointed.

Dona Veronica soon after visited a sick woman on their farm, who was a believer, and this person invited her to attend a Gospel meeting in her house. To this meeting she went, and recognising the Bible stories she heard during the preaching as being what she had read in her Catholic Bible history, told her husband afterwards that it was very good. Soon after this a neighbouring farmer commenced meetings in his house (which have continued ever since) and she became a regular attender. She became deeply interested and converted, and ever since has been a bright Christian woman. She bought a Bible and her

husband began to read it, and was also converted. Now all her children are believers, and two of her sons are Gospel preachers. Nearly all are married and begetting children who are being brought up under the influence of the Gospel. What shall the harvest be from a few seeds sown by two girls at a party?

CHAPTER V

Pardon and Peace

IT is now thirty-six years since Dona Maria Freitas lived in the town of Therezopolis, some thirty miles from Rio de Janeiro. She was eagerly looking forward to the Bishop's visit to the town. Her sins were troubling her greatly, and she was terrified at the thought of the great Judgment Day, and the account she would then have to give to God. Not that she had lived a particularly bad life, far from it, for she had spent long hours in "rezas" (forms of prayer), but still she was in despair as to her soul's welfare. She had for a long time been in the habit of spending an hour a day in "rezas," but without getting any relief, but rather growing worse, so for the year previous to the bishop's visit she had doubled the length of time in these exercises. She also believed that, not only had she to give an account of every sin, but also of every hair of her head, and was at her wit's end to know how it was to be done. She had hopes of getting rid of her sins by prayers, and confession to the priest, but had no certainty of peace whatever. She had made up her mind to try

at all costs to get a special interview with the bishop, and perhaps his absolution might be more efficacious than that of the parish priest. It so happened, however, that before the bishop's visit, her sister Adelaide came up from Rio to see her. This sister had been attending some Gospel meetings in the city, and had been converted thereby, and wished to break the news to her sister Maria, but greatly feared for the result, knowing that her sister was so much attached to her own religion. At last she told her that she had made a great discovery, that the Roman Catholic religion was all wrong, and that the truth was to be found only in the Holy Bible, a Book which told all about the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death upon the cross to save sinners, and explained how one could obtain the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. Maria was greatly startled, and a sudden gleam of hope came into her soul. Perhaps this book could solve all her spiritual difficulties and give her rest from her distress of soul? She had once seen a Bible some time before on the table of a house that she happened to visit. She had opened it and read HOLY BIBLE, OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. She had heard, however, that anyone who once began to read this Book had to read it right through under pain of Coming Judgment. Realising that she could not read through the whole Book in a short time, she had closed it with a sigh. When, therefore, her

sister advised her to read the Bible, she determined to do so without delay. It so happened that some miles away there lived an old black man who had been a slave. Years before he had been given the duty of cleaning out an old cellar for his master, and there found a large Bible thrown away. This he had carried off with him and guarded carefully. He had tried to read it, but was so ignorant, and read so badly that he had not understood very much, though before he died he was converted to God. Maria's husband went off before breakfast to procure this Bible, and when he brought it home, Adelaide read aloud whilst Maria and her husband listened eagerly. They experienced the truth of what the Book says, "they that seek shall find," for both Maria and her husband found the Saviour, and that without the help of the Bishop. Soon afterwards two Brazilian brethren came up from Rio to visit them, and "expounded unto them the way of God more perfectly," and shortly afterwards they removed to another town, where there were regular meetings for the Breaking of Bread and ministry of God's Word. They with their children and grand-children, are now living in a more inland country place, but are still running the race with patience, and helping on the work of the Lord. Dona Maria has learned that her Father in Heaven can count the hairs of her head far better than she could ever have been able to account for them.

CHAPTER VI

A Brand from the Burning

DURING our recent visit to the Matta we passed a night with an Italian brother, named Angelino. His house is the customary meeting place for the believers of that neighbourhood on Sundays, and we had a Gospel meeting there. Before leaving next morning to continue our journey, we asked our host to tell us about his conversion, as he appeared to have rather an unusual sense of the Lord's grace in him. Even though now he has been a believer for about six years, he has not got over the surprise that God should have saved him of all men in the world. He told us the following:—He used to be a terrible man, spending his time and money in drinking caxaça (the "fire-water" of Brazil), and going about with his revolver, firing at anything he happened to pass. There came to live in his neighbourhood two German Christian men, one of whom had once been a drinking companion of Angelino. These two Germans began to hold Gospel meetings in various houses, and to some of these the wife of Angelino went, and was converted. She is the daughter of a neigh-

bouring farmer, who is also a German. The preachers urged her to invite her husband to the meetings, but for some time she was afraid to make any such suggestion. However, one day she screwed up her courage and asked him to attend with her. The husband stared in blank amazement, and told her that she must leave him to his drink and revolver. The German brethren were praying very specially for him, and the change in the wife gave her more influence with her husband. She continued to invite him, so that at last he promised to go for once only, to satisfy her. When the evening came, his courage almost failed him, but he prepared himself by loading his revolver, also arming himself with a large bottle of his favourite drink, and sallied forth. He replenished the bottle on the way, and when at last he reached the house he was so unsteady that on alighting from his horse he fell down. In spite of this, he managed to stagger into the room where the meeting was being held. It had already begun, for owing to the amount of refreshment he had taken on the way, he had arrived late. Notwithstanding this fact, he went round the whole company present, shaking hands with each one, including the preacher. Having performed this ceremony, he began again, this time offering each one a drink from his gin bottle. When he reached the preacher, who was reading a Scripture, the German dropped his Bible with astonishment, whereat the Italian thought he must be drunk. When

the other German believer (his one time drinking companion) refused the bottle, he told him that he was only refusing for appearance in present company, for he was a harder drinker than himself. Some of the men present wanted to turn the intruder out, but the German brethren would not hear of it. He remained fairly quiet during the rest of the service, and afterwards the preacher had a talk with him, but made very little impression. They resolved to continue in prayer for his salvation. After some days they felt that they should visit him in his house. When they were drawing near to the house, Angelino saw them coming, and thinking that they had come to rebuke him for his conduct in the meeting, he told his wife that he was going to shoot them both on the doorstep. He went to get his revolver, but before it was loaded, they arrived, and greeted him so kindly and warmly that he forgot his weapon, and made them welcome. They came in, chatted in a friendly way, and then asked permission to read a portion from the Word of God, which they did, explaining the passage to him. They then asked what he thought about it, and he replied that it was very good, but not for him, as he could not part with his revolver or drink. After this he began to attend the meetings, but apparently against his will. He became afraid that he was going to be converted. He tried to make up his mind to attend no more, but in vain. When it was drawing near to meeting time, he often deter-

mined to run away and hide in the wood, but when the hour arrived, it always found him listening to the Gospel. The struggle went on for some time, but in the end Angelino was obliged to give in. He asked the Germans what would happen to his revolver if he got converted, and they told him not to worry about that, but first of all to become converted, and then carry the weapon as long as he thought he ought to do so. One night he broke down completely, and returned home a converted man. Then came the question as to his favourite weapon. He decided that it was not the thing for a Christian man to carry about with him, so what should he do with it? He sold it at a very reduced price, but afterwards regretted that he had not buried it in the ground. The desire for *caxaça* seems to have left him at once. When his German father-in-law heard of his conversion, he thought it a huge joke, and said that his unworthy son-in-law would be back to the bottle in a week or two. The old man (whom we visited) is half an infidel, but will not on any account risk attendance at a Gospel meeting. He admits that the change in Angelino for so many years is a very astonishing affair.

Angelino now longs for the conversion of his neighbours. One day, not long before our visit, a neighbouring youth came to his house armed with rifle, revolver, and long knife. He was at feud with another youth in the locality, and they were seeking to kill each

other. Angelino warned him against such a crime, and urged him to do as he had done, to get right with God, and drop his fire-arms. The youth scoffed, saying he was a Catholic. The next day at the same hour he was shot dead from behind by his enemy who had been hiding some time in order to kill him. Such crimes often go unpunished, but in this case the murderer not long afterwards met a similar fate.

We left Angelino's house with a fresh sense of the greatness of the saving grace of God.

CHAPTER VII

The Old Bible

DONA NICOTA is a farmer's daughter, living near the Campo de Minas district.

She is one of the most devoted and active Christian workers in that neighbourhood, and a true evangelist. She was the first of her household to receive the Gospel, and through her, all the members have been converted. Their house is a centre for Gospel preaching, and other meetings. During a visit there, I took the opportunity to ask her to give me an account of her conversion which is here related.

The family was strongly Roman Catholic, and her mother early taught her to say prayers to the Virgin Mary, the "good Jesus," and to various "saints." Without knowing quite why, she soon took a dislike to praying to the Virgin Mary, and the "saints," so that her mother called her a "little heretic." Amongst various prayers was one asking the "good Jesus" to enlighten her mind, and this became her favourite petition.

As she grew older, it was not only a prayer that she often repeated, but the great yearning

of her heart. Whilst still young, she came into touch with spiritism, and at first was attracted by the teaching, as she believed that it contained some light that the "Holy Church" did not possess. Her mother was alarmed and warned her against it, and as she was in poor health and liable to fits, her daughter had to follow the "new light" with great secrecy.

One day, Dona Nicota went to visit a sick friend, and during the visit, she spied a large book sticking out of a box of rubbish under a table. She asked her friend what it was, and was told that it was a very bad book called the Bible, which the priest had forbidden the family to read, so that it had been thrown aside. Dona N. at once asked if she might have it, and her friend, very reluctantly gave consent, but warned her against reading so dangerous a book. Dona N. had heard of the Bible, and had an instinctive idea that it contained the light that she was seeking. She hurried home with her prize, and carefully hid it in her bedroom. She feared that her mother would find out that she had obtained some bad book, and would have one of her fits in consequence. By the light of a little smoky lamp, she read through the following nights to almost dawn, beginning at the first chapter of Genesis, especially to find out what the Bible had to say about the Virgin Mary. Night after night she read on, getting little sleep. At length she read through the Old Testament, and found in

the Gospels what the Book had to say about the mother of the Lord.

About this time she heard that some people called "crentes" (believers), held meetings some twenty miles away from her home, having what they named "preaching of the Gospel," and reading the Bible, the very Book she was now studying. News came that a special conference was about to be held there, and an Englishman was to be one of the speakers. A great desire took possession of her to attend that meeting, but there were many difficulties in the way of getting there. Her family would be horrified if they knew that she even entertained such an unholy idea, and her mother would most probably have a series of fits with serious consequences, if she heard that her daughter had gone amongst the heretics. Dona Nicota, however, is a very determined person, and was not going to allow such difficulties to hinder her when there was such an opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached. She made up her mind that by some means or other she would contrive to attend this special meeting in the hall. How was she to manage it? A young woman in Brazil may not go a hundred yards from her house alone without a breach of the conventions, and this undertaking would mean twenty miles by horse to get there, rising early in the morning, and staying a night away from home. It so happened that some friends of the family—"Big John" and his wife—on a previous visit had brought strange things to

their ears, which some said was "Protestant heresy," and was, no doubt, doubly dangerous owing to its being hidden like leaven, in some very fine thoughts and apparently Christian expressions. John had not been attending church ever since he saw a priest hit a poor woman on the head before a mass, and had been attending "Protestant" meetings. Dona N., therefore, thought of him as a suitable person to help her in her plot. She secretly had a message conveyed to him, begging him to visit her home with some of the family the day before the conference, and then to invite her to go back with them on a return visit, and incidentally to call at the Casa de Oração (meeting hall), at the hour of the conference. The good John "casually" turned up at the house, and Dona N. yielded quite easily to his persuasions to pay them a visit next day. Her parents, nothing doubting, allowed her to go, and rising up early next morning, they set out and reached the hall in time for the meeting.

For the first time in her life, Dona Nicota, attended a Gospel meeting. She was the best listener in that congregation as she prayed fervently her old prayer for light for her dark mind. She followed every word with intense eagerness and with tears in her eyes. The preacher announced as his text the verse in the first chapter of Genesis, "God said; Let there be light," and then proceeded to show that the Lord Jesus, the Light of the World came

to enlighten men and women as to their sinfulness and as to the love of God. Dona N. there and then received the light into her soul, and returned next day, rejoicing in the new-found light, and to shine in her home. She had taken with her a servant of the house to whom she always confided everything, and she also received the Gospel message into her heart during the meeting. This servant, the night before this memorable journey had a dream in which she saw everything which happened the following day down to a small detail, such as alighting from the horse to pick up a coin, and later giving it to a beggar. She told Dona N. this dream, and all came to pass that day.

On arriving home, the mother was in bed, and the daughter feared she would have a fit if she told her. She was, however, far too full up with the good news to hide it. She began by insisting upon family prayers in which she led them. Fortunately, a well-to-do aunt, her mother's sister, was staying at the house, and recognised what her niece expounded to them as similar to what she herself had read in an old family Bible she possessed; and championed her against the family, who thought that Nicota had gone mad, and embraced the "Protestant heresy." The aunt was the first to believe the Gospel, and soon all the other members of the family did likewise. Her mother so far from having fits, arose from her sick-bed, and has never had another during the 15 years that have passed since her conversion.

The neighbours prophesied terrible things, that the judgment of God Almighty would speedily fall upon the family for forsaking the "old religion." Shortly afterwards, a great storm dislodged a huge boulder from the cliff, near-by, and it came rolling down the hill in the direction of the house, but turned aside and stopped without doing any harm. The "prophets" pointed out that this was a fulfilment of their words, but Dona Nicota replied that it did but show God's special mercy and intervention on their behalf, as the boulder, although aiming for the house, had been deflected in its course. The cheerful neighbours foretold further disasters. As providence seemed unwilling to aid them, some went to the proprietor of their land, and made a number of false accusations against the family in order to influence him to dismiss them from the house and grounds. He is a Roman Catholic, but in reply to the false charges, he suggested that the accusers might profit by their neighbours, and learn at least one very useful lesson from his Protestant tenants, which was not to tell lies.

So the work continues to this day, and Dona N. never loses an opportunity of letting her light shine in the surrounding darkness. She has sought to evangelise her well-to-do relatives, as well as her poor neighbours, and even the priests when she has had the opportunity.

CHAPTER VIII

Joseph and his Brethren

THE Gospel meeting was over. There had been about seventy people crowded into the front room of the farm-house, and perfect attention. We were dispersing, some going to houses near-by, others setting out for their homes about a league distant. I (the preacher), was staying about four miles away, with our good brother Senhor Luiz Vieira. My companions on the journey included Joseph and some of his brethren, sons of the elderly couple living in the house where we had just had the meeting, and in which one is held every Sunday evening. I knew them as an amiable family, with a good testimony, and Joseph as an active evangelist, though a humble tiller of the earth. To beguile the hour as we walked homeward, I asked Joseph to tell me how the Gospel had reached him and his family. Joseph, being married to a daughter of Senhor Luiz, mine host, and working on his land, lives near his father-in-law. Nothing loth he told me his story.

“Our family were all spiritists,” began my friend. “There were my parents, five brothers,

and two sisters all living at home, for I married after my conversion. We were a disgraceful household and notorious for our quarrels. Our parents were for ever quarrelling with each other, and with their children. We children fought each other, and quarrelled with our parents. My sisters appeared to be possessed with demons, and one of them committed suicide. My younger brother here, was insane through spiritism for five years before his conversion, but has been perfectly sound ever since." The younger brother thus referred to, cheerfully confirmed this statement as to his former sad mental condition, and especially as to his present state of equilibrium. Joseph continued: "One day I visited Senhor Luiz (now his father-in-law) and told him of the wretched state of our family due to the constant feuds. He promptly told me he knew of a splendid cure, in fact, it was all written down for the simplest to understand, in a book which gave instructions for every relationship of life. I replied that if ever a family needed a remedy, ours did, for we were utterly miserable. Sr. Luiz then produced a Bible and advised me to read it. This I did, and also began to attend the meetings held in his house. Very soon I was converted, and one by one, every member of the family was reached except my sister that lives away, and the one that committed suicide. The result is, that now all is changed, and we are a happy, united family. We have done for ever with spiritism and have

the Gospel preached in the house that was once the scene of so much strife.”

After his conversion, Joseph got married. He had been called up as a reservist to serve in the army against the revolutionaries, but seemed to have enjoyed every hour of his “campaign.” Fortunately he had not to fight the rebels, but occupied all his spare time in evangelisation.

CHAPTER IX

Joseph and his Neighbours

JOSEPH and I were again returning with a group of believers on the same road from the preaching in his father's house one Sunday evening. In the front of us, as we started out for home, was a young couple who had attended the preaching. The young woman was carrying a heavy baby of about a year old. I asked Joseph who they were, and he replied that they were a couple recently converted at the meetings. I suggested that we should take it in turns to carry the baby. The baby was duly handed over, and we trudged on, for some miles, each taking a turn with the load. After some three miles, we neared the parting of the ways, and a big black bachelor brother handed the baby to the child's father to carry up the steep hill to their home. We said "good-night," and went on our way. Said Joseph, "We have taught that young man a lesson without speaking a word." "How?" I enquired. "Well," explained our brother, "he never helps his wife with the baby. They walk a league to the meeting, and a league back, and she has to carry the burden all the

time, but now that he has made a start, and we have shown him an example, he will probably continue to do the right thing." "He is better than he used to be before his conversion," chimed in another. "Before then he used to beat her, but he has now ceased to do that." Here, mine host, Senhor Luiz broke in, "As to that, we all did something in that way before we were converted."

Thus it will be seen that family and matrimonial relationship are changed when the Gospel enters the heart and home. When Senhor Luiz was converted a few years before this, he opened his house to the Gospel, and at first had to direct the meeting by himself. The country is sparsely populated, and his house is 10 miles from a city. Within a few years there were 80 participants at the Lord's Supper, and these come in from a radius of several miles. The Gospel is now preached in several points around, and so the light spreads.

CHAPTER X

Spiritism

SPIRITISM obtains a tremendous hold upon the people of Brazil. The Church of Rome is opposed to it, but powerless to combat it. Many cases might be given of the evil effect it has, and how the Gospel is the only power to overcome its evil influence.

I was sitting writing one day on a fallen tree, when a young man, whom I did not recognise, accosted me. I enquired who he was, and he told me that he had been converted down in the coffee machine-house during a Gospel meeting we had held there a year previously. I asked him for details, and he told me that he had been a spiritist. The spirits had haunted him, followed and tormented him. When walking out by himself along the road he would hear them calling him by name, and he would turn round angrily, but there was no one near. At times he was seized and thrown bodily into the bush, no man being near him. At nights, oftentimes, he was forced to get up and go out, and that when it was raining heavily. He tried drinking caxaça (fire-water) but this form of spirits had no power to overcome the

more evil ones, and he gradually got worse. As a last hope he came to the Gospel meeting, and committed spirit, soul and body into the care of the Saviour. At that hour the spirits left him. He is now a Sunday school teacher and a communicant in the local church.

CHAPTER XI

The Demon-Possessed Young Man

ONE Sunday morning my fellow-worker and neighbour received an urgent call to go and visit a young man, named Alcibiades, who lived about seven miles away, and who had suddenly become controlled by evil spirits. My friend asked me to go with him, and we set out together on horse for the farm-house where the young man lived with his parents, who were well-known to us. The youth belonged to a Christian family, but was pursuing a fast life. He was engaged to marry an Italian girl, but her father, not caring for the match, had been to a seance and there invoked the spirits to kill Alcibiades. The morning before our visit he was forced against his will by some unseen force to attend a seance, and had returned home possessed of evil spirits. He was constantly calling out that he was a medium, and that Antonio (a young man who had been murdered near-by, a year previously), was calling from hell for Senhor Alberto (my companion), to pray him out of it. Alcibiades had neither eaten nor slept since then, and in his frenzy had to be held by four

men, from jumping over the high verandah. Thus they sent for my companion. As we were passing through the forest over the hill, far out of sight of the house, the spirits cried out (through the young man), that there were two men coming, that they were weakening, and that one had a new Testament. When we arrived all was quiet. Alcibiades was sitting quietly on the form, but as we approached to speak to him, he sprang up into the air, his features transformed, his eyes staring into space, his body quivering, and he shouted in a frenzy that the soul of Antonio was in hell and calling to be released. The men seized him and tried to hold him by main force. There was a frantic struggle, and then the spasm was over. He returned quietly to his seat, looking down stupidly and breathing hard. After a time we again approached him, suggesting prayer, but immediately he was seized with another attack almost worse than the previous one we had witnessed. These attacks had been going on for twenty-four hours. It was a terrible sight, a repetition of the previous seizure, and then he sat quietly down. After witnessing a third attack, we persuaded some of the neighbours we suspected of spiritism, to retire, whilst we prayed for the young man. When they had gone out, we asked God in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the evil influence might be cast out of him. Our prayer was immediately answered. In a short time he asked for something to eat, which

he had not done for 24 hours, and a little later said that he felt sleepy, and went to bed, and slept until next day. On Monday he got up and went to work though feeling weak, and worn out. The following day he was quite normal, and during the last few years, has had no repetition of this terrible experience. He was perfectly normal mentally, and strong physically, before and since that time. He is now married and professes to be a believer. As we journeyed homeward on that Sunday afternoon, we desired to be preserved from ever again seeing a human being possessed of a devil.

CHAPTER XII

Fire and Brimstone versus Incense

AFTER a long journey into the "regions beyond," we at length reached the village of Bom Jesus, where we hoped to stay for a few days, and visit different points in the neighbourhood. In Bom Jesus is the mother church of several in the neighbourhood. We arrived on a Saturday, but found that a number of the believers had gone by invitation, to the house of a family that had become strangely troubled with evil spirits, in order to "pray the demons out." The family in question, though neither spiritists or believers, had called in a spiritist "treater" to attend to a member of the family, a young woman, who was ill. The spiritist "quack" had burnt gunpowder on or near to her cheeks to effect a cure for some bodily ailment. This is a favourite "remedy" we were told, and no doubt the fire and brimstone of the gunpowder betray the origin of the "medicine." So far, however, from effecting a cure in this case, the poor girl became possessed of a worse evil. She began to do alarming things, putting red hot cinders into her mouth, and destroying the

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE VERSUS INCENSE 61

family clothing. These symptoms also spread to other members of the family, so that they became alarmed, and decided to invite the believers to come and "exorcise" the evil spirits. Accordingly they went, and had a prayer meeting. The spirits fled, no doubt having found fire and brimstone more inviting than the incense of the "prayers of saints." The result was that the family began to attend the Gospel meetings, and have no more desire for spiritists.

CHAPTER XIII

A Strange Conversion

WHILST visiting the Campo de Minas for some special conferences, we took the opportunity to visit various houses of believers, amongst them was that of our brother, Fernandes. He called together his happy family, and we had some hymn-singing, for they are quite musical. "How long have you been converted?" we asked of our good brother. Fernandes rose from the block of wood that served as a seat, and went over to the block-calendar. Taking down the one in use, he counted the old cards that were behind it, of which there were nine, and replied, "ten years, Senhor." The significance of the back numbers of cards would be apparent to a Brazilian believer. When a man is converted, he buys a text calendar each year. This contains the daily text, and below it the references of the Scripture Union daily portions, which are annually supplied from headquarters by courtesy, to the compilers of the calendar. The Christian families read these portions every morning. The head of the house comments upon the passage, and then leads in

prayer, the whole family being gathered around, and always standing for the prayer. In the evening, in many of the households, the calendar is again taken down, the daily text for the day is read, and prayer follows, before retiring for the night's rest.

We then asked Fernandes to give us an account of his conversion. He told us that he believed that he had been possessed of a demon, and in any case he was a thoroughly bad man. He loved to drink caxaça (a type of whisky made from the cane sugar), and to fight, and would often return home in a drunken condition, and ill-treat his wife, and cause his family to flee from the house. Ten years before our visit, he had been invited to the house of a neighbouring farmer, Oscar Rezende, who had "turned Protestant," the neighbours said, though Oscar himself would have said that he had been "converted," and was now a "crente" (believer). He is always our host when visiting the Campo, and the extent of his hospitality would "take away the breath" of any Britisher. Even though he may have 30 or 40 other guests in his house to sleep and to feed, he looks after each individually, which oversight he usually performs with a baby or child in his arms to relieve his wife of the burden. He is a natural gentleman. When he laughs it sounds like a gatling gun going off. His father, after having had thirty children, had been murdered. Then Pedro Rezende, our veteran preacher had visited his relatives, and evangelised the neighbourhood.

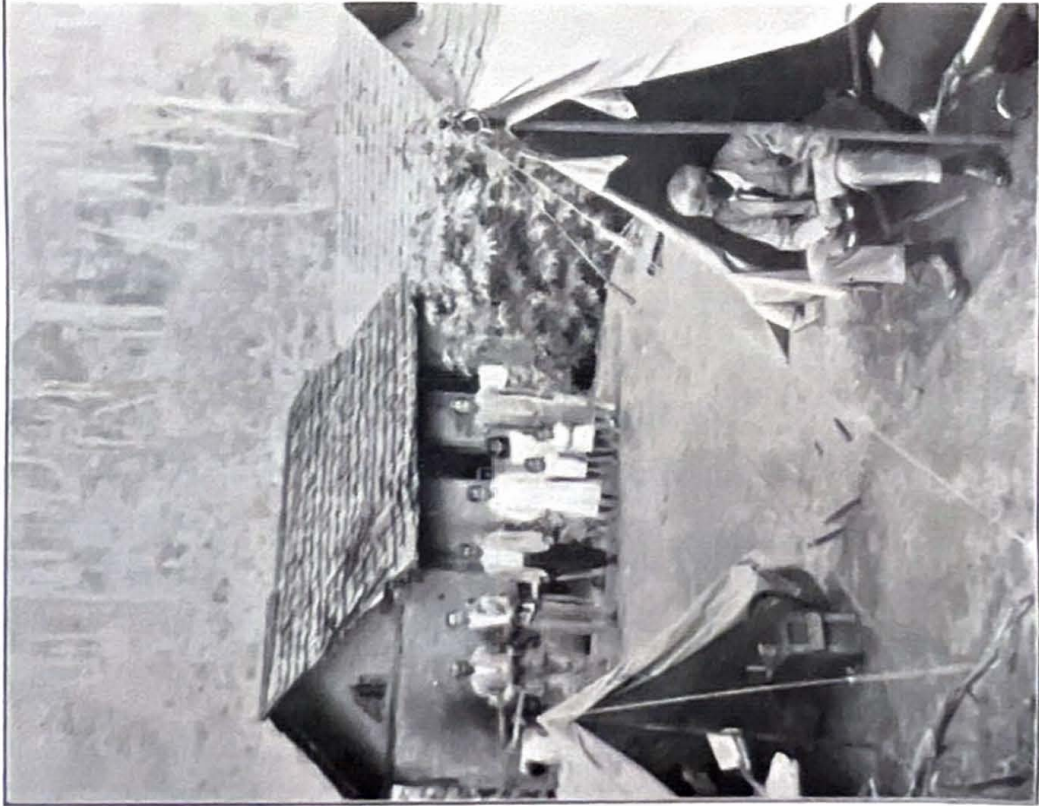
Oscar, and some of his brothers and sisters, had been converted, and he opened his house for Gospel meetings. To one of these our friend, Fernandes, was invited, and he went along to see what it was all about, and being fond of music, was especially attracted by the singing. It so happened that they sang the hymn (translated into Portuguese, and to same tune as sung in English) "The Gospel Bells are Ringing." The first verse has the text John 3. 16 paraphrased, and this took hold of Fernandes, the tune helping to fix it in his mind. Now, it is not often that a Brazilian such as he, comes to a meeting for the first time, and is converted straight away. Our friend, however, appears to have received the message immediately, and on leaving the house, he told us, he jumped two metres into the air, which he declared was because the devil went out of him! After this record gymnastic feat, he proceeded with equal dexterity to rid himself of all that pertained to his old evil life. Instead of beating his wife, he began to love her, instead of frightening his children, he began to teach them to sing hymns, and to take them to the Sunday school and other meetings. He bade a tearless farewell to his old friends, and to his firearms, and was to be found at every meeting possible. He told us that he had a box of "saints." On our expressing surprise that saints should be so confined, he explained that these were images of various saints, which the "faithful" regarded



A FARM HOUSE IN THE CAMPO DE MINAS.
AFTER THE PREACHING.



TRAVELLING IN BRAZIL.



CAMPING OUT.

as holy relics, but the believers called them "idols." Soon after his conversion, he invited together his neighbours to give them a surprise. When all were assembled in front of the house, he lighted a bon-fire, and then to the astonishment and horror of the company, he emptied the contents of the box into the fire. There was a howl of indignation, and one old man rushed to the rescue of the "saints." He managed to secure one, but its head broke off, and he ran off with the broken fragment. Fernandes seems to have enjoyed the general consternation, and cried out that if the "saints" had either sense or strength, they would save themselves. As it was, they were all reduced to ashes.

An old companion, a former fighting friend, of Fernandes then began to come around the house and call out "Protestant," and other hard words. At last our friend got hold of him, and laying him out on the dirty wet ground, rolled him over and over with a large staff, used for beating the rice. Having thus taught his former friend "respect," he allowed him to get up, and go home. The local Church, however, heard of these proceedings, and had something to say on the subject. Fernandes was called to give an account of his "lapse." He explained that he had not hurt the dear fellow, and had only sought to teach him humility (a Christian virtue), and respect for his neighbours. The Church, however, took another view of the matter, and told him that

they did not regard it quite like that. It could not be considered as Christian conduct, and Fernandes must go and beg the man's pardon. Our brother, therefore, went and humbly apologised and became again quite friendly with the man who had tried to persecute him. This same man, when he was dying, called for Fernandes, and before he passed away, was brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by his old friend's words.

Fernandes began to evangelise his relatives. He kept on the track of his brother for two years, until he was converted. This brother, Acasio by name, has since been a great help for he has some gift as a preacher, and for many years now has rendered valuable service in spreading the Gospel within a radius of twenty miles of his home.

As we enjoyed a few happy hours with this family, we found it difficult to visualize this kindly man, with his sense of humour, who looked so happy in the midst of his family, as a one-time drunken bully and wife-beater, but such is the power of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XIV

The Conference

IN the month of August, we attended some special meetings lasting for three days, held in Bugre, in the Matta district. Here is one of the largest congregations, possessing a Casa de Oração (Hall). This was the first conference of its kind in this district, and was held with the object of helping the believers from the neighbourhood. The following description is not an outline of meetings, or ministry, but a sketch of some of the principal persons present.

One of the "chief men amongst the brethren" at the conference, was the veteran preacher, Pedro Rezende. He is now nearly seventy years of age, but can still do his thirty miles a day on his old mule, with much younger men. He is small made, thin, tough, active, and never seems to get tired. He hails from the Campo de Minas, many hundred miles away. He accompanied Mr. George Howes in his early visits to Brazil thirty years ago, and had some adventures and narrow escapes, for in those days there was more persecution than to-day. He has introduced the Gospel into various

districts, more especially into the Campo, where he was born, and has many relations. Pedro is a very faithful man, most uncompromising as to the Truth he holds, and when there is aught wrong in an assembly that he happens to visit, he has a very clear pointed way of bringing home their fault to the erring saints. At present he is much distressed because some of the believers are taking part in politics, and politics in Brazil are about as unhealthy as one could imagine. Pedro does not beat about the bush when, in a meeting, or in private conversation, he seeks to frustrate their politics. He is a great reader of *Leituras Cristãs*, the magazine for believers, which comes from Lisbon, and he thinks that there is naught like it under the Brazilian sun. He is a good preacher, with a thin, clear voice which begins very low, getting clearer every minute, until he is warmed up, and then it becomes quite sharp and penetrating. He is more of an evangelist than a teacher, although he does a good deal of instructing during his visits. In a difficult church question he at times lacks tact and patience. Pedro is a much beloved brother, and rightly esteemed for his devotedness, and his work's sake.

Looking round the Casa de Oração when all are assembled, one notices the four brothers, named Bello, who are "pillars in the Church," and there are also many relations, some twenty they said. This family was the first to bring the Gospel light to the Conceição

district, about thirty years ago, and 10 years later, when the work was well-established there, they migrated to the Matta, when the district was nearly all "matta," or forest, where they soon began a live Gospel work, and have continued to this day, so that there is a well-established Church in Bugre, and many congregations around.

Over there is an elderly man who is married to a sister of the Bello brothers. His reception to the Lord's Supper was rather unusual. When he was converted, he applied to be received to the Communion, but admitted to having committed a murder some seven years before. The local church was in a difficulty. What ought the brethren to do, and what ought he to do? Ought he not first to confess the crime to the authorities? He replied that he had not faith to do so, having married subsequently, and he had a family to provide for. A man who confesses for conscience sake cannot bribe the jury to return him "not guilty," so would be liable to receive a long term of imprisonment. The brethren decided that he could not be received until he delivered himself up. Of course, everyone knew he was a murderer, as they always seem to do in Brazil, that is, every one except the police, who are not let into such secrets. For thirteen years, therefore, this brother was kept waiting, until twenty years after the murder, as a crime is then regarded by Brazilian law as dead and done with. When, therefore, he was free from

the law, he was allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, and continues to this day.

Across the Hall yonder, is a man named Sr. Naphtali, from a distant valley. He is a land-owner, with a nice house in which we have preached the Gospel. He too, is a converted murderer. When he committed the crime, he was tried and condemned in spite of his wealth. This would hardly be due to inadequate bribing, but he was made to suffer through political agency, his party not being in the ascendant at the time of the trial. If he had belonged to the opposite party, he would most probably have escaped. In prison he procured a Testament, and was brought to repentance for his crime and past life, through reading it. He found rest of soul through the words, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

When he was released from prison, he was completely changed, and now has meetings in his home, and a school for the children of the neighbourhood.

Then, there in the corner is our German Brother Christiano. He came from Germany about six years ago. He had been wounded in the Great War, but afterwards gained a good reputation in his own country as a preacher of the Gospel, and soul-winner. Unfortunately, he does not speak Portuguese well, and is, at first, difficult to understand, and the fact that he shouts aloud and spares not, does not make his language clearer. He also preaches to his

fellow-countrymen, of whom there are many in the district. He is a very sincere, upright Christian man, a good example, being a hard worker on his property. He is apt to misunderstand his Brazilian brethren, as he has never studied their mentality or way of viewing things. He looks at everything through German spectacles, and will not try on Brazilian glasses.

That big man in the front is "the giant," being six feet and six inches in height, and of ample proportions. He came from Conceição, some years ago. His father, though formerly a staunch Roman Catholic, had been one of the first in the valley to receive the Gospel light, but has long since gone Home. The "giant" himself takes very little part in ministry or preaching, but the influence of his life has been great in the Bugre district, for he is much beloved both by saint and sinner (including spongers), for his kindness, hospitality, and sympathy. He is a gentleman, as well as full of Christian grace. He is often called upon to help to settle local disputes, which would otherwise most likely be settled by the revolver. His wife told us, whilst we stayed at their house, that the latter process takes place almost every week, and pointed to a spot a few yards away from her house where one such case, which ended in one of the disputants being shot dead, had occurred, just a few days before. In spite of these facts, the priest, when he comes to preach in the church in a near-by village,

tells his congregation that the "Protestants" are thieves and murderers, his topic being on these lines every time. On their return home from these edifying sermons, some of the "faithful" usually call at the "giant's" house to have a cup of coffee, and to entertain him and his wife with the details. They know well the kindness of this good couple and their Christian example, and these speak louder than the priest's sermons, which cause more amusement than ill-feeling. The wife, though small, is as full of kindness as her husband.

When there was a widow with two or three children left without resources, they took them in to live with them. When there was an unwanted child, they at once opened their house, and adopted her. If there is a road to make or mend, a bridge to construct, a house to build, our kind friend is first to offer his services. No one is turned from their door, for there is always board and bed for the traveller, even though he be unknown. Their motto is "ready to every good work."

Our description would not be complete without a word about that pugilistic brother on the front seat. He somehow gets out at elbows with everyone (except, perhaps, his wife, whose tongue is like unto a sharp razor, they do say). He is contentious to the last degree, though at our conference he was on his best behaviour. He has some gift as a preacher, and has done some good work, but what he builds up with his right hand, he knocks down

with his left. Of course, this quality is not unknown in England (and even Scotland). Contentiousness, however, is not a common feature of the Brazilian believers. Outside of the Church, disagreements often lead to bloodshed, and this makes people careful in the matter of giving offence. Whilst the believers do not revenge themselves thus, yet they are not accustomed to dealing with contentiousness. Our brother, unfortunately, regards himself as being persecuted for righteousness sake, and thus in apostolic succession.

A week after the conference, I attended a Bugre Church meeting, to discuss their local business, and the items on the agenda were:

(1) To discuss the reception of an applicant to fellowship at the Lord's Supper. They agreed that after being baptised, he should be received at once.

(2) To warn the Church that they must not maintain (as the manner of some was), personal friendship and social intercourse with a certain man excommunicated for a serious offence. This Scriptural injunction is often more difficult to observe in Brazil than in England, owing to the greater hospitality in country places like Bugre.

(3) To suggest to a dear brother that his daughters were foregathering at the Casa de Oração (Meeting Hall), in skirts that lacked in length (then fashionable), and he was requested to use his paternal influence to persuade them to amplify their Sunday

dresses. The father consented to do his best.

I found it very interesting, as an onlooker, to hear some intelligent Brazilian brethren, discussing and deciding problems that in principle are similar to those in England, but under conditions quite different. "What saith the Scriptures" is their test, and court of appeal, and it is wonderful how the Word of God fits every case and circumstance.

CHAPTER XV

Muleteers and Horse Thieves

IN the interior of Brazil, where there are but few good motor roads, where towns are far apart, and the country rough and hilly, the horse and mule play an important part. All learn to ride in childhood, and it is a common sight to see aged folk jaunting along the road on one or other of these animals. Troops of pack-animals are to be met with everywhere, driven by muleteers on horse or foot. These men are a "rough lot," accustomed to sleep in the open, and run all day in dust, sun or rain, behind their troop, adjusting the loads, bringing back the wayward mules, lifting the fallen, and urging on those that lag behind. They possess one virtue, and that is faithfulness to their charge, for it is a point of honour to "deliver the goods." One muleteer who has accompanied us in many of our voyages, is typical of his class, physically, but different in character, for he is a Christian man. His name is Theodoro. He is as active as a wild-cat, strong as a horse, willing and tireless, and always ready for any emergency. He is a great-grand-father although but a young

man of 55 years old. When he was about half this age, he was in a bad way. Drink was beginning to pull him down, and like the rest of his fraternity, it was dangerous to interfere with him. He got employment with a Christian farmer (the "giant"), which was most fortunate for him, and his sadly neglected family. Instead of providing for his children, Theodoro's money was going to the vendor of the terrible caxaça (fire-water). The good farmer and his kindly wife often fed and clothed the wife and children. He was fast "going to the dogs" when he began to attend the Gospel meetings in the house of his master. He could not have described exactly what happened, but the Gospel message began to sink in, and it softened his heart and changed his life. He was a converted man—"a new creature." Instead of wasting his money, he used it carefully, and had enough and to spare, for he was a hard worker. Some years later his master moved away, and Theodoro had sufficient money put by to buy some land. By means of hard work, and with the help of his family, he has now a fairly large coffee-farm, and he is able to slack off a little from farm work. Nothing pleases him better than a journey by road, superintending our mule-troop, and guiding us on our Gospel itinerations, especially should our journey take us to the house of his old master, the "giant," for whom he has a deep affection, for was it not through his kindness that he and his family were saved from

being dragged down to wretchedness and doom?

During our last visit there, one of the "Giant's" sons, Abraham, a strong, strapping youth, arrived home with his mule-troop from the city 24 miles distant, and informed us that he had spent the previous night in prison. As Abraham is a model of good behaviour, we were somewhat surprised. He acts as a muleteer for his father, and had taken the load of coffee to the town in the usual way and was preparing his dinner with other 18 muleteers before sleeping in the "rancho." A strange man had poked himself in amongst them, and as muleteers have to beware of vagabonds and thieves, one of them had ordered him away, and by way of encouragement, had applied a leather thong to his back. The stranger went to the chief of police and charged the muleteers with battery and assault. The chief came down with a posse of armed police, and just as the muleteers were about to dine, marched them all to gaol, that is, all except the perpetrator of the "outrage," whose conscience would not allow him to remain on seeing the executors of justice advancing. The eighteen innocents were put together into a cell about seven feet square, and there they laid down in several layers to sleep, hungry, but as happy as might be expected under the circumstances, having all clear consciences. Next day they were allowed to come out, and after being warned never to let it occur again, they were dismissed. We hoped that the other

seventeen took their punishment as cheerfully as our friend Abraham did.

The enemies, both of muleteers and all who own horses and mules, are the horse-thieves. These men are always armed, and prepared to kill any who oppose them. When caught they receive no mercy. One of our neighbouring farmers, a Christian man who often entertained us, one morning saw a man making off with his mule, and called to him. In reply he received a revolver bullet in the jaw, which laid him out, and the man got away. Our friend, fortunately recovered from his wound. The Casa de Oração on the ground where he lives is built on the site where some years before a gang of horse-thieves made their last stand. They were rounded up by police and farmers, and there exterminated. The hall is built upon the site where their bones were buried, a beautiful spot in a peaceful grotto.

We were staying once with a Christian settler in the backwoods, who told us that one day a suspicious looking man applied for, and received hospitality in his house and showed no disposition to leave him. The believer had sold some property shortly before and had hidden the proceeds of the sale in his house. The guest made many secret enquiries from others, but could not locate the hidden treasure, and the host began to have a suspicion that his guest intended to murder him if necessary to the obtaining of his wealth. They had daily reading of the Bible, and prayer,

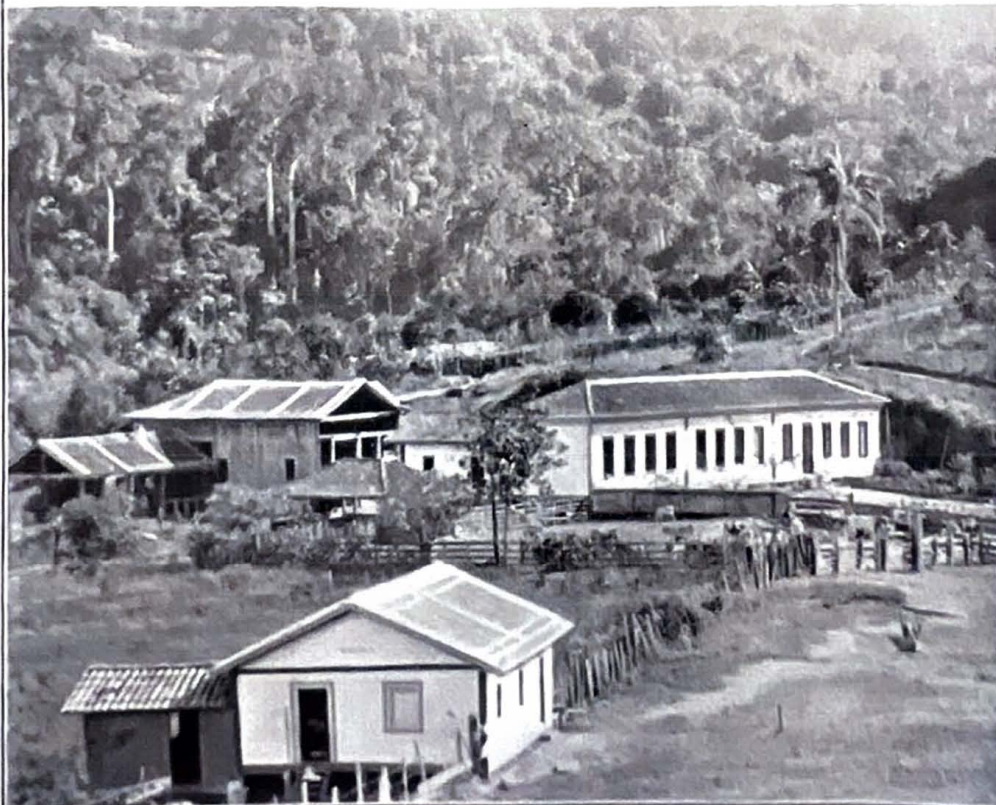
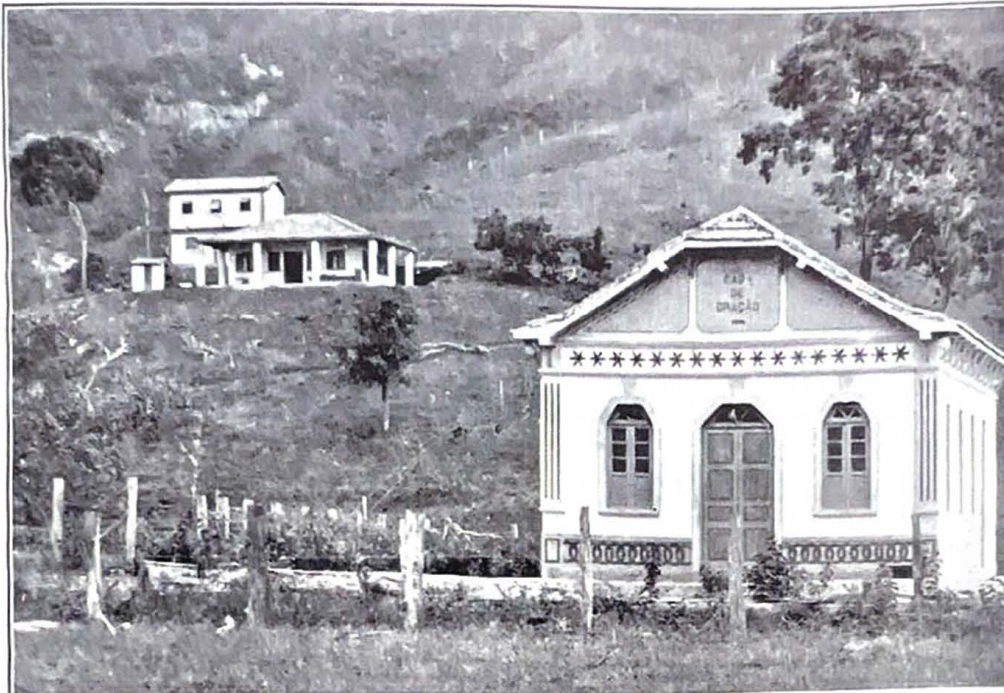
and the guest began to show interest in the Scriptures, and asked if he would give him the Bible. Our friend could not spare that, as he had but one Bible in the house. The guest's past sins, however, were beginning to encompass him about, that is the avengers of his sins, and he suddenly disappeared taking a neighbour's mule. Shortly afterwards he was rounded up by a group of farmers with the usual result. Where there are no police the residents unite to form an armed band, and go man-hunting. Whether the avengers are police or farmers, the chase ends in the same way. No prisoners are taken, and the urubus (Brazilian vultures) act as the undertakers.

CHAPTER XVI

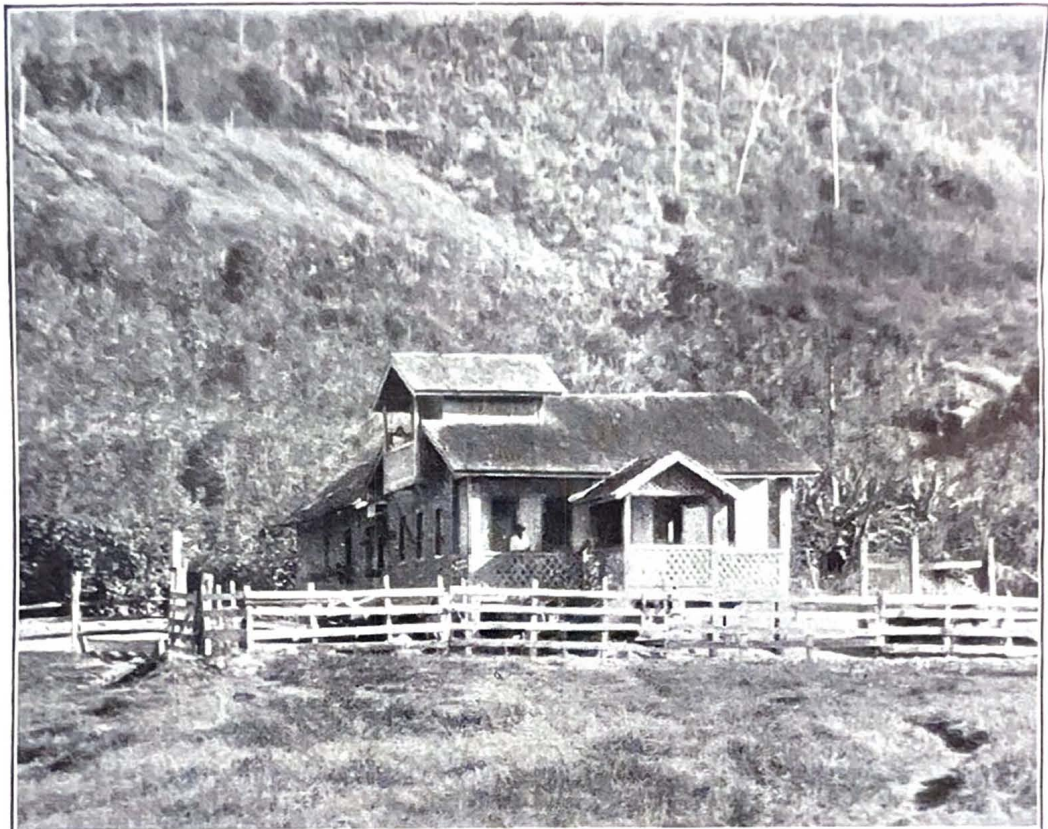
The Man in the Mud

THE village of Bom Jesus is a patrimony, which means that the land on which it is built was originally left by one of the "faithful" to the "Holy Catholic Church." Such land is still regarded as possessing a certain amount of sanctity, but it must be of a very abstract nature, as there is no odour of sanctity but dirt, and deeds of darkness frequently characterise these villages. Bom Jesus was actually a most unholy place, and being far from any city, was also very lawless.

Herein lived a young man named Senhor Bemvindo (which being translated, means "Welcome"). He was short of stature, but powerfully built, strong of arm, courageous, and very ready with his weapons. He had spent some time in prison for knifing an enemy, and was generally considered as a "man of respect." It so happened that two Brazilian preachers visited the patrimony "prospecting" with a view to preaching the Gospel. They could find none willing to let them have a house or room for a meeting. Twelve sons of the Church of Rome had heard of their in-



CASA DE ORAÇÃO, AND BIBLE SCHOOL, BARREIRO,
FARMHOUSE OF SR. LUIZ LOURENÇO.



FARMHOUSE OF THE CONVERTED MURDERER, SR. NAPHTALI.
A BRAZILIAN VILLAGE.

tention, and vowed that the patrimony should never be desecrated with "Protestant heresy," and swore to kill any preacher, and break up any meeting. The news of their intention reached the ears of Bemvindo, and out of bravado he opened his house to the preachers. He invited them along and his neighbours to come and hear them. At the appointed hour they all came, and so did the twelve brave men. These found Bemvindo waiting to welcome them. He was on his door-step, armed with rifle, revolvers, and knife. He invited them up with the sinister threat that if any of them mounted the steps to the house, he would shoot them quite dead. The "twelve" held a council meeting outside, to discuss the delicate question of precedence. Their deliberations took so long that the meeting inside went on and finished before they had come to any decision as to the right course to take under the circumstances. The meetings were repeated, and the faithful sons of the "Mother Church" decided that the patrimony had become hopelessly desecrated by the Gospel. Bemvindo, therefore, had no longer any need to stand guard so attended the meetings, and was converted, and so were many more. He became quite a pillar in the church and married into a nice Christian family, and now they often entertain the preachers who visit the neighbourhood. Now, there is not only a large church in the patrimony, with a good hall, but there are other congregations around in the neighbourhood.

One evening they were assembled in the hall for their week-night prayer-meeting, when an old black man of nearly one hundred years of age was passing. He was a notorious old scoundrel, a spiritist who practised the "black art." At the moment he was passing, our friend Bemvindo happened to be praying, and the old fellow stood outside cursing and blaspheming at the door and open windows, and disturbed the meeting. He then went on his way, and being the worse of drink, fell into a mud-hole some distance from the village. Here he got firmly fixed, and could not get out, for the more he struggled the deeper he went into the mud. Bemvindo had to pass the same way, and, on going home, found the old fellow a fast prisoner. Our brother is an evangelist who "sows besides all waters," and what could offer a better opportunity? He sat down by the old black man and preached the Gospel to him. The prisoner in the mud could not get away from it, though it is doubtful if he appreciated the message, or thought it as seasonable as the preacher did. Having concluded the sermon, Bemvindo got hold of the old man, and by sheer force pulled him out of the mire. Then all wet and dirty as he was, our brother put him on his shoulders and carried him all the way home. The old chap was amazed, for he did not expect this kind of revenge for his conduct, and he thought at least he might have been left to die in the ditch. Bemvindo told him that the Lord would do even more for his

soul, pulling him out of the mire of sin, and would carry him safely Home. The old man came to the meeting to hear more, and was converted, thereby causing quite a sensation in the neighbourhood. This took place last year, just before we visited the village. Quite recently I enquired as to the case, and was told by a believer from this distant part, that the old man never missed a meeting when he could possibly get to one; and his family, too, were all attending. They have now to enlarge the hall to accommodate the many people who are frequenting the meetings.

CHAPTER XVII

Brazilian Coffee Farmers

IN the coffee-growing districts of Brazil, the farmer's wealth is usually calculated by the amount of coffee that he collects in the year. Living on his estate are various families, for whom he provides houses, allots a certain area of coffee plantation, and also sufficient land for them to grow maize, beans and rice. These families do all the work of cultivation, and collecting the coffee-beans, for which service they receive half of the proceeds of the sale thereof, and the owner of the farm has the other half.

One of the wealthiest of our Christian farmer friends is Senhor Luiz Lourenço. Perhaps it is more correct to speak of his wealth in the past tense, for after inheriting his property, he over-estimated his own worth and honesty of his neighbours, and became surety for many of them. When the coffee crisis came, he found that he had to pay the debts of so many of these dear friends, that in consequence he was somewhat pressed for ready money, and now bankers and creditors

pay him more attention than do these one-time "friends."

Senhor Luiz lives in the house shown in our picture. It was built by his father, who owned leagues of the richest land. He, however, was not satisfied with what he possessed, but coveted the lands of his brother-in-law. In order to obtain easy possession of these, he murdered the owner, and on the farm stands a cross to mark the spot where the murdered man fell. The murderer continued a life of debauchery, until one evening, returning home in the dusk, he too, fell, shot from behind by the avengers of blood. It was said that he was killed by his nephews, the sons of the murdered brother-in-law. A cross also marks the spot where he died.

The estate was then divided amongst his sons and daughters, Luiz, the eldest, becoming possessor of the principal farm-house on the estate.

Fortunately the Gospel entered the hearts and homes of some of the heirs of this vast property. Luiz, the eldest, who is a man of fine physique and kindly disposition, was converted. He built a school-room for meetings, and Sunday school as well as day school for the children of the neighbourhood. Now, in this valley there is a well-established Church, and a well-built Casa de Oração. After his conversion, he was charged with having "left the religion of his fore-fathers." Luiz replied that he certainly had done that, and right gladly, seeing what manner of men

his fore-fathers were. Three or four other members of the family are also believers. One of them, Dona Maria, is a fine Christian woman. She lives in the city and devotes her spare time from family duties to good works, visiting hospitals, the sick and needy, and also holds women's meetings, and a Sunday School.

Alas, how quickly does a family go back to type! The nephews of Sr. Luiz, living in the adjacent property, are following in the footsteps of their grandfather. One of them, a youth, shot an employee dead in the farmhouse one morning. The victim was a good worker and left a widow and six children. The murderer went off to the city where he has "friends at court." He has also money, and is not even going to be brought to trial, as they say that "there is no case against him." A witness against him, who is a believer, not being willing to change his evidence and swear falsely, thought it advisable to move hastily to a distant part, leaving the employment of the youthful murderer.

These contrasts serve to throw into relief the effects of the Gospel on the characters and lives of our Brazilian friends.

* * * * *

Another farmer, Virgilio Tinoco, is the owner of the property on which is built the Casa de Oração shown in one of our pictures. In this peaceful neighbourhood of Barreiro, crime is now almost unknown. The meeting hall is crowded on Sunday mornings and even-

ings, and on two evenings of the week. Twenty years ago the Gospel had not entered here, but how different was everything in those days! The farmer has always been noted for his hospitality. Before his conversion he cultivated sugar-cane, and manufactured caxaça (Brazilian whisky). He invited his friends and neighbours to drunken orgies. Not only did he make the night hideous, but in the light of day committed evil deeds, the description of which would soil these pages. Then the light of the Gospel shone into this dark place, changing the farmer and his family, and transforming the neighbourhood. Our friend still delights in hospitality, but there is now no caxaça on the festive board, and the guests are usually peaceful Christian people.

Up there in those buildings, behind the Casa de Oração, a Bible school is now held. The youths study during the mornings and evenings, and during the day they work on the land for about 5 or 6 hours, and thus earn their maintenance. The object of such schools (and there is more than one), is to give the youths an opportunity of learning the truths of Scripture and other knowledge, better than they could do in their homes, in order to make them useful in the Master's service when they return to their own neighbourhood, without severing their connection with the soil.

* * * * *

Just a mile or two over the hills from Barreiro, there is another flourishing congregation,

which was commenced by Sr. Virgilio's son-in-law, Senhor Joaquim. He has an extensive property, with many houses upon it. Before his conversion he had been known to threaten his father-in-law with a revolver when there was some question between them, for this weapon is regarded as a very persuasive argument. He is the oldest son of a large Christian family, most of whom were converted at the same meeting many years ago. After his conversion, he obtained this property, and soon began an active Gospel work there. The Church grew rapidly, and they built a Casa de Oração which they have now almost outgrown for it is hardly large enough. No matter how pressing is the work during the harvest time, all service has to cease on "meeting night," an hour or so before the usual time, to enable any to attend the meeting who wish to do so. Thus Sr. Joaquim prospers materially when the neighbours do not, and he has emerged triumphantly from overwhelming difficulties brought on by the "coffee crash."

The coffee crisis came in 1930. The price suddenly slumped to one third of its former market value. Many farmers were ruined, and their estates sold to pay their debts and mortgages. The farm-workers nearly all found themselves in debt for they had drawn upon credit in view of the harvest. When the coffee was sold, they found that they had overdrawn either upon the farmer or at the store, generally with both.

Sr. X was one of the Christian farmers that was nearly ruined by the slump. He was formerly well-to-do, and had invested his savings with various farmers, who paid him 18% interest. In Brazil, 12% was the usual mortgage rate, and loans without legal security ran between 18% and 25%. This rate is about three times what is paid in England. It shows clearly the relative financial morality that obtains in Britain and in Brazil.

Sr. X was a just man, but by no means a generous one. He paid all his accounts promptly and that is by no means a Brazilian trait, but he was known as "very secure," which is Brazilian for "tight-fisted." His brother is "the giant" whom we have already met in this book. He had moved to the Matta, and was struggling with difficulties there. He had to pay 24% on his mortgage, and this was strangling him financially. The "giant" came to his "very secure" brother appealing to be helped by him with a loan at 18% interest, in order to pay out his 24% loans. Sr. X, thinking that his brother was not very secure, and much too generous, refused him this financial aid. Thereupon the "giant" set himself to the task of overcoming his difficulties. He and his stalwart sons worked from dawn to dusk, and often after dark or before day-break, economising in every way except in their generosity to others.

Now he has won the day in spite of the coffee crash, low prices, mortgages, and other

difficulties. He is to-day in a comfortable position financially, which cannot be said of many Brazilian farmers around him. What of the "very secure" brother? A year or two after the coffee slump, he died after a long illness, heavily in debt. He had lost money heavily on coffee when prices fell, and his investments failed, for the farmers whom he deemed to be safer than his brother, could not pay him. His large family is now struggling to make a living and to keep the estate intact but his sons are worthless and likely to lose everything. Had Sr. X helped his brother, he himself would have been in a better position before he died. This story contains a moral.

CHAPTER XVIII

Priests

THE question is often asked: "What is the attitude of the Government, the Church of Rome, and the priests towards the Gospel in Brazil?"

The Government accords full religious liberty. Formerly, under the Emperor, the R.C. Church was allied to the State, but with the incoming of the Republic in 1889, the Church and State became separated, and to-day the authorities, both high and low, seek to maintain freedom of worship and teaching, for all religious bodies.

From the priests, opposition is naturally expected. The Church of Rome having been recognised by the State for nearly 400 years, took badly to the idea of equal status of all religions, and has made repeated attempts to recover her lost position. At one time, Protestant bodies and preachers were persecuted by the priests, even though the law exacted toleration. To-day, although there is opposition to the preaching, active persecution is decreasing, and in many places has disappeared.

A few instances known to the writer will, perhaps, help to illustrate the past and present position. In 1900, an English missionary, and one of the Brazilian preachers referred to in this book (Pedro Rezende), when leaving a farm-house meeting, were attacked by a large mob incited by a priest. He had evidently given his faithful followers too much caxaça, for their aim was so unsteady that their horses received the blows intended for the preachers, with the result that they rode right through the mob and escaped injury. To-day, this priest follows more peaceful pursuits than the hunting of heretics. His own parishioners complain that he cares more for his low pleasures than his religious duties. As to the "Protestants," he now recognises that they have come to stay. In fact when some of them whom he regarded as his enemies went to visit him, during an illness, he received them quite graciously. He is also less generous with caxaça, except for personal use.

A parish priest once attacked one of the Christian proprietors mentioned in this book, by means of scurrilous articles in a local newspaper, but his bishop thought it advisable to remove the priest on this account, for our Christian friend was a highly respected and influential man.

A very common, though legitimate way of preventing "Protestant propaganda" from spreading amongst the Roman Catholics, is adopted by the priests. This is to arrange to

hold mass in one or more places near-by, when there is to be a special Gospel effort. This is to call away the "faithful," so that they shall not attend the preaching. Their plans are not always very successful.

One priest, whose parish is uncomfortably situated amidst several "Protestant" congregations, regards himself as a great champion of his Church. He edits a fiery magazine to which he has given the name "The Fighter." The pages of this choice periodical vomit abuse on all "Protestants" in true volcanic fashion. The reverend editor excels in knocking down dummies that he himself has erected, and all this he does to his own great satisfaction, and to the edification of his "faithful" readers. Unfortunately, some Protestant preachers spend much time and energy in attacking the Romish Church, instead of spreading the positive truths of the Word of God. These attacks work up our fiery editor into a frenzy, for he appears to believe that such aggressiveness is his special prerogative. It would be well if it were so, for attacks upon his Church only confirm a true Catholic in his belief that "Protestantism" is a devilish doctrine, invented by Satan to overthrow the "true Church," and drag the souls of her children down to hell. On the other hand, it is possible to talk to fanatical Catholics about the Gospel without their being able to scent heresy, and they may even admire the gracious words spoken.

In a city in the interior, a "Protestant" lay dying. His life had been exemplary and his work greatly blest. The parish priest visited him, ostensibly to try and persuade him to be reconciled to the "one true Church" ere his soul departed hence. The dying believer entertained the priest with such holy conversation that the latter forgot his mission and his holy office. The two clasped hands, and the priest listened enchanted by the dying words of the so-called heretic. Whilst he was yet speaking, his spirit took flight to its long Home, and the priest remained holding the lifeless hand of the departed saint!

The news of this terrible lapse on the part of the priest was noised abroad and reached the ears of the holy friars in the local monastery. They were all dreadfully shocked. The nuns also heard of it, and were horrified. Indignation grew, and the friars felt it was their painful duty to report the parish priest to his bishop for this misconduct. The bishop sent a pastoral letter to the erring padre, commanding him to perform a penance. There are two churches in the city, and the priest was required to say mass in both of them on the same day. The sting of this penance lay in the fact that it is always necessary to fast before performing this holy office. The "penitent" priest was, therefore, obliged to fast for half a day. No doubt the friars and nuns felt grieved that he had got off so lightly. What the bishop and the culprit thought was un-

known to the world generally. One suspects that the bishop's idea was to do his duty tactfully. It is to be hoped that the priest thought that the remembrance of the words of the dying man was well worth a fast. Though he did penance he expressed no word of penitence for his "sin."

The priests almost invariably live in towns or large villages. As the work which has been described in this book is mostly in the country, and often leagues away from a town, the people seldom see a priest. A rich farmer occasionally arranges for a special mass in his house and the priest comes to perform the ceremony, but the majority of country people are left to live and die without the help of a priest.

Like all other classes of human beings, priests vary in type and character.

There is, for instance, a priest who loves "to live well." One day he returned from the neighbouring town, but having partaken of too much refreshment by the way, his gait was unsteady so that he fell and had to be helped home by reverent hands.

Then there is the intellectual type, who will courteously discuss religious questions with his Protestant neighbour.

Some priests are good natured and beloved by their parishioners. Their "holy office" is held in awe, but friendliness and kindness on their part will give priests great influence with simple folk.

There are, no doubt, a few of the priests who

have the fear of God, and a living faith. The believers described in this book will in "the sweet by and bye," meet such on the Golden Street of the Heavenly City. The writer trusts that every reader of these pages will also be there.