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OUT OF THE TRIANGLE.

A STORY OF THE FAR EAST.

BY

MARY E. BAMFORD.

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OUT OF THE TRIANGLE

CHAPTER I.

A voice rang through one of the streets of Alexandria.

"Sinners, away, or keep your eyes to the ground! Keep your eyes to the ground!"

The white-robed priestesses of Ceres, carrying a sacred basket, walked in procession through the Alexandrian street, and as they walked they cried aloud their warning.

So, for four centuries, since the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, had priestesses of Ceres walked and called aloud their admonitions through this city; though of late years men had come to know that what the sacred basket held was a live snake, supposed to be the author of sin and death.

Before the great temple of Ceres in the southeast quarter of the city, the crier stood on the steps of the portico, and proclaimed his invitation: "All ye who are clean of hands and pure of heart, come to the sacrifice! All ye who are guiltless in thought and deed, come to the sacrifice!"

Among the passing people, the lad Heraklas shrank back. When the sacred basket of Ceres had met him, he had bent his eyes downward, deeming himself unworthy of the sight. And now, as the crier's invitation rang from the portico, "All ye who are guiltless in thought and deed, come to the sacrifice!" Heraklas trembled.

Swiftly he hurried away and passed down the broad street that led to the Gate of the Moon on the south of Alexandria.

At length he reached the gate, but swiftly yet he pushed forward a short distance along the vineyard-fringed banks of Lake Mareotis. Heraklas lifted up his eyes, and marked how the vines by the lake's side contrasted with the burning whiteness of the desert beyond. The glaring sand shimmered in the heat of the flaming Egyptian sun. A thin, vapory mist seemed to move above the heated, barren surface of the grim sea of sand. Heraklas stretched out his hands in agony toward the desert, and cried aloud, "O my brother, my brother Timokles! How shall I live without thee?"

The soft ripple of the lake beside him seemed like mockery. The tears rolled slowly down his cheeks, as he looked toward the pitilessly unresponsive desert of the west and southwest. Then Heraklas, helpless in his misery, raised his hands with the palms outward before him, after the custom of an Egyptian in prayer, and addressed him whom the Egyptians thought the maker of the sun, the god Phthah, "the father of the beginnings," "the first of the gods of the upper world."

"Hail to thee, O Ptahtanen," began Heraklas, "great god who concealeth his form, . . thou art watching when at rest; the father of all fathers and of all gods. . . Watcher, who traversest the endless ages of eternity."

The familiar words brought no comfort. Between him and the shimmering desert came the memory of his brother's face, and Heraklas forgot Ptahtanen, and cried out again in desperation.

His eyes strained toward the desert. Somewhere in its depths, his twin brother Timokles, the being whom of all on earth Heraklas most loved, lived,—or perhaps, in the brief week that had elapsed since he was snatched from his Alexandrian home, had died. Timokles had forsaken the gods of his own family, the gods his own dead father had adored, Egypt's gods. The lad would not even worship the gods of Rome. Timokles had become one of the Christians, and had, in consequence, been falsely accused of having, during a former inundation, cut one of the dykes near the Nile. This offense, in the days of Roman rule, was punishable by condemnation to labor in the mines, or by branding and transportation to an oasis of the desert.

Timokles, innocent of the crime charged upon him,—having been at home in Alexandria during the time when he was accused of having been abroad on the evil errand,—was dragged away to exile, for was he not a Christian? Living or dead, the desert held him. The Roman emperor, Septimius Severus, who ruled Egypt, had lately issued an edict that no one should become a Christian. What hope was there for Timokles?

"He will never come back!" said Heraklas now, with a low sob, as the desert swam before his tear-filled eyes. "O Timokles!"

There was a rustle among the leaves not far away. Heraklas turned hastily.

But it was no person who disturbed his solitude. Heraklas saw only the head of an ibis, called "Hac" or "Hib" by the Egyptians, and the lad, mindful of the honor due the bird as sacred to the god Thoth, the Egyptian deity of letters and of the moon, made a gesture of semi-reverence. He remembered what the Egyptians were wont to say, when on the nineteenth day of the first month, they ate honey and eggs in honor of Thoth: "How sweet a thing is truth!"

Heraklas murmured with a heavy sigh, "Timokles told me he had found 'the truth' O Timokles, is thy 'truth' sweet to thee now? Oh, my brother, my brother!"

Heraklas cast himself down among the vines, and wept his unavailing tears. Little did the lad, reared in a pagan home, know of the sweetness of the Christian faith, for which Timokles had forsaken all.

Heraklas' small sister, the child Cocce, sat on the pavement in the central court of her home in Alexandria. Above her towered three palms that shaded the court. Beside the little girl was an Egyptian toy, the figure of a man kneading dough. The man would work, if a string were pulled, but Cocce had thrown the toy aside. Lower and lower sank the small, brown head, more and more sleepily closed the large, brown eyes, till the child drooped against a stone table that was supported by the stone figure of a captive, bending beneath the weight of the table's top.

As Heraklas entered the court his eyes fell upon his sleeping little sister, but he noted more closely the stone captive against which she leaned. Heraklas marked how the captive was represented to bend beneath the table's weight. The boy's eyes grew fierce. Captivity seemed a cruel thing, since Timokles had gone into it.

Heraklas flung himself on a seat covered by a leopard's skin, and gazed moodily upward at the palm-leaves, one or two of which stirred faintly under the slight wind that came from a corridor, whither the wooden wind-sails,—sloping boards commonly fixed over the terraces of the upper portions of Egyptian houses,—had conducted the current of air.

Borne from the streets of Alexandria, there seemed to Heraklas to come certain new, half-heard noises. He listened, yet nothing definite reached his ears.

At length, seeing through a range of pillars a slave moving in the distance, Heraklas summoned the man, and asked what was the cause of the faintly-heard sounds.

"The people destroy the possessions of some of the Christians," humbly replied the slave, whose name was Athribis; and Heraklas, stung to the quick by the answer, impatiently motioned the man away.

Left alone, Heraklas lifted his head proudly. He would ignore the pain. What had he to do with the Christians? He, who had watched his consecration-night in the temple of Isis; he, who had caught some sight of the Mysteries sacred to that goddess; he, who had worn the harsh linen robe and those symbolic robes in which a novice watches his dream-indicated night—what had he to do with Christians? Would that Timokles had observed the emperor's command that no one should become a Christian! Heraklas groaned.

The dismissed man-slave, Athribis, looked cautiously back through the pillars, and smiled. None knew better than he how any reference to the Christians stabbed the hearts of this family. Athribis himself hated the Christians. He longed to be out in Alexandria's streets this moment, that he, too, might be at liberty to pillage the Christians' houses. Who knew what jewels he might find? And he must stay here, polishing a corridor's pavement, when such things, were being done in the streets! His dark eyes glanced back again. Heraklas' head was bowed.

Stealthily Athribis passed out of sight of the court. He threaded his way through corridors.

"Whither goest thou?" asked another slave by the threshold.

"I go to the market to get some lentiles," glibly replied Athribis; and, passing, he quickly gained the portal and the street.

"One, may find that which is better than lentiles," Athribis communed with himself, as he wound hither and thither through the excited crowds. "Should a Christian have jewels, and I none? I, who am faithful to the gods!"

With this the slave plunged into a company of house-breakers, and with them boldly attacked the dwelling of a Christian. It was easily taken, and Athribis rushed with the company into the interior. Stools and couches were wrenched to pieces, cushions were torn, tables were overthrown.

"Woe to the Christians of Alexandria!" fiercely muttered one man. "We will root them from our city! They shall die!"

The crude brick of the building gave way, in places, under repeated blows. The stucco of the outer walls fell off, and was tracked with the crushed brick into the halls. Some of the rude company, rushing to the flat roof of the building, discovered there, hidden by a wind-sail, a treasure-box, as was at first supposed. On being hastily opened, however, the box was found to hold nothing but some rolls of writing. Contemptuously the box was kicked aside.

"Come down! Come down!" cried voices from the court. "Here are the Christians!"

The loud clamor from below announced that the Christian family had indeed been discovered, and would be taken to prison.

The company on the roof made haste to descend, to witness the family's humiliating exit. As Athribis passed by the box again, he looked more curiously at it. Surely the scrolls must be of

some worth. He could not read, but perhaps something of value might be secretly hidden inside each of these scrolls. Who knew? It must be! It seemed incredible that even Christians would be foolish enough to fill a treasure-box with nothing but rolls of writing, and then conceal the box so carefully behind this wind-sail!

Athribis purposely lingered a little behind the other men. He snatched up the rolls, and having hidden them in his garment, hurried from the roof.

"I am a Christian," calmly said a voice in the court. "Yea, I have striven to bring others to Christ."

There stood the father of the household, his wife, and their two children, one a girl of thirteen, the other a boy a little younger. They had broken the emperor's decree. The father did not deny the charge brought against them. It was his voice that Athribis had heard, and the same voice spoke on:

"My children," continued the father, "our days on earth come to a close. Let us sing our twilight hymn, for now indeed our work is nearly done."

Above the scornful tumult rose the four voices, singing the "Twilight," or "Candle Hymn," of the early Christians. The children's tones trembled a little at first, but soon grew firm, as if sustained by the calmness with which the parents sang. The angry faces around the court became yet more fierce with hatred, as, through a moment's pause, the rioters listened to the words of the hymn:

"Calm Light of the celestial glory, O Jesus Son of the Eternal Father, We come to thee now as the sun goes down, And before the evening light We seek thee, Father, Son And Holy Spirit of God. Thou art worthy to be forever praised by holy voices, O Son of God; thou givest life to us, And therefore doth the world glorify thee."

Mocking cries arose from the mob. Not daring to linger longer, Athribis ran out of the house, and hastened homeward, full of apprehension as to what might await him.

"Where are the lentiles?" asked the slave by the threshold, as Athribis, forgetful, in his excitement, of the excuse he had made for his departure, passed swiftly and softly in.

"I found none," quickly answered Athribis, with alarm.

He sped silently to his former place of work, and fell to polishing the pavement with a zeal unknown before. He knew well enough that the slave by the threshold would not believe in that excuse, lentiles being plentiful enough. Terror had robbed Athribis' deceitful tongue of its usual cunning, and now he silently bewailed his startled answer. If the slave by the threshold should report to Heraklas' mother the fact that Athribis had been away!

Athribis longed to have time to unroll the scrolls which he had hidden in his garment, but he dared not look at them till he should be alone.

A voice sounded in the court. Athribis redoubled his zeal: He recognized the tones of Heraklas' mother.

"I was not long gone! I was not long gone!" the guilty Athribis hastily assured himself. "Surely she hath hated the Christians, even as I hate them! I was gone but a moment! Surely she cannot know! If I find treasure in my rolls, I will give some to the slave by the threshold. Surely, treasure is as dumbness to a man!"

The footsteps of the mother of Heraklas drew near. The servant bowed over his work, and dared not lift his eyes. She did not stop! And Athribis looked breathlessly after the woman, as she passed majestically on.

"Surely she hath not known what I did!" he gasped as the stately figure disappeared among the columns. "Isis preserveth me from stripes! My feet are unbeaten!"

Athribis waited till night, when the household slept. Then he crept out of the little chamber on the roof where the slaves were wont to sleep, according to the custom of Egyptian households.

A dim thread of a moon floated toward the west. Athribis crept to a far part of the roof. The wind blew somewhat, but it did not cool the fever of excitement felt by him. Within a moment he might be rich! He might find gold in these scrolls!

He drew out the scrolls. Surely there was something firm inside this one! He felt something! He narrowly scanned the Christians' papyrus, as he hastily unrolled it. His lips were parted with eagerness, his breath panted into the heart of the scroll, as he held his face down that he might see. He unrolled the papyrus to the end. He sat up, and drew a breath. His bare feet kicked viciously at the unrolled papyrus. No treasure in that first scroll! He seized the second. With eagerness all the greater because of his former disappointment, he searched through this roll, his face bent down till his eyelashes almost swept the surface of the writing. In vain! There was nothing!

"These Christians! What cheats they are!"

He snatched the third roll. With trembling fingers he unrolled this, the last of the papyrus scrolls. There must be something hidden! It could not be possible that he would be disappointed in the last scroll! Was there no treasure? Not a thin wedge of gold at the heart of this papyrus? Not a jewel, not anything that savored of riches?

Athribis' shaking fingers unrolled the papyrus to its very end. Nothing but the continuous writing, and the stick on which the scroll had been rolled! His limp hand let fall the end of the papyrus. It descended upon the heap at his feet. Had he dared, he would have cried aloud in his disappointment.

But it was not his voice that pierced the night. Some one had seen him!

"A robber!" cried a woman's tones. "A thief! On the roof!"

Athribis leaped to his feet. He caught the papyri. Alas, alas! they were not rolled, now! The wind tossed the long streamers, and as Athribis in fearful haste snatched them, the breeze blew one scroll entirely free. It, swept from the roof, and, descending into the court, hung in a long strip from one of the palms.

The dismayed Athribis cast the other papyri on the roof, and fled. It was time. The house was being aroused by the cry of the woman. With his bare, silent feet, Athribis sped through the shadows of the corridors to what he thought a secret spot, and hid himself. The house resounded with outcries. Feet ran hither and thither.

Out in the court, hanging all unseen from a palm-tree, swayed the papyrus, the written copy of part of the Sacred Book of the Christians!

CHAPTER II.

It was night on the Libyan desert. The stars glittered on the rocky highlands that compose so much of that desert, and lit faintly, too, the areas between, where stretches of sand waited to be shifted by the next simoon that should blow.

In one spot, at the edge of a rock, there was a movement of the sand. Out of it a form slowly rose.

The sand shook near by, and another person appeared. Another arose, and another, till five had arisen.

The man who had first appeared spoke, slowly, in a voice that told of exhaustion.

"The Emperor Septimius Severus reigneth over our land," he said. "He hath forbidden that any one should become a Christian. But how shall we cease to tell men of Christ? How shall he cease to draw men to himself?"

"Severus hath not been always thus," answered another voice, faint with weakness. "Proculus, the Christian, once saved the life of either Severus or his child, and the emperor took Proculus into the palace and treated him kindly, and chose a Christian nurse for Severus' boy, Caracalla. When the Romans rose against the Christians, Severus shielded our brethren. Oh, that the priests of the false gods of Egypt had not enticed our emperor!"

"Alas for him!" responded the first voice. "The Emperor Severus worshipeth the false gods of Egypt, but we serve the Lord Christ. Farewell to Egypt's gods! They shall pass, but Thou shalt endure!"

"Amen," murmured the lad Timokles. "Even so! Thou art Lord of lords, and King of kings, O Christ!"

Suddenly there was a cry of other voices. Up from the rocks of the plateau behind the five there sprang a second group of persons.

The five Christians, knowing the voices of their former heathen captors, fled. The lad Timokles was closely pursued. He felt, rather than heard, close behind him, the footsteps of his enemy, and, turning sharply, Timokles sped away in another direction.

Here and there, back and forth, the two ran in the star-lit darkness. The five Christians were widely scattered now. Shouts and cries came faintly from a distance. Timokles rushed toward the rocky plateau.

"Stop, Christian, stop!" cried his enemy, leaping forward with outstretched hand.

But Timokles fled, stumbling over stones. On came his enemy's swift leap behind. A piercing cry, as of some one in agony, rang from the desert's distance. Timokles sped faster.

"Stop!" commanded the voice of the runner behind. "Stop!"

A swift prayer burst from Timokles' lips. He fled on, his pursuer so near sometimes that Timokles' heart failed him.

"Stop!" screamed his foe. "Stop!"

The fierce command pulsed through Timokles' brain. The man behind suddenly slipped, stumbling over the stones. He fell heavily, and in that instant's time, Timokles darted forward behind one of the rocks, and, creeping underneath it, lay breathless in the darkness.

The man struggled to his feet. Up past the other side of the rock rushed the pursuer. Timokles, quaking, expected every instant to be discovered.

"Where art thou?" savagely called the man. "Where?"

He ran hither and thither with fiercely muttered imprecations. Now his footsteps sounded farther off, and now again he ran back and came softly stealing around among the rocks. Timokles laid his branded cheek against the gravel, and waited.

The footsteps went, and came, and went again in the dark. Timokles trembled from head to foot. He did not fear death, but he dreaded capture and unknown terrors.

The dark form passed by again. A chill went over Timokles, as he thought he saw a weapon in the man's hand.

The footsteps became inaudible once more. Timokles, waiting a long time, imagined his foe might have gone. As the lad was about to lift his head, a hand brushed along the side of his rock, and reached out into the dark, underneath. Timokles was perfectly quiet. The hand above him felt down the sides of the rock, waved in the darkness above the boy, descended and rested an instant on the gravel next him—but did not touch him. The silent menace of the groping hand was terrible. Timokles held his breath.

The hand passed on, feeling of other rocks.

"O God of thy people, thou hast hidden me!" cried Timokles in his heart, as he heard the soft rubbing of his enemy's hand against the farther rocks.

The sound died away. Timokles lay listening for a long time. Once he thought he heard a creeping sound, but it was only the wind.

Sleep came upon him at last, and when he woke it was day. He dared not come out, but lay there through the torrid hours, moistening his lips now and then with a little water from the small, skin water-pouch he carried.

The sun plunged beneath the horizon at last, with the usual seeming suddenness observed in the desert. Night was welcome to Timokles, and he came forth. The lad's heart was very lonely. He looked toward the northeast, and remembered his Alexandrian home—his mother, the brother with whom Timokles' whole life had been bound up, the little sister Cocce, whom Timokles had last seen playing gleefully with a toy crocodile, and laughing at its opening mouth.

"O Severus!" whispered Timokles, "what didst thou see, when thou visitedst Egypt five years ago, that thou shouldest decree such evil against the Egyptian Christians now?"

Softly Timokles went his way in the dark. He was hungry, yet he dared eat little of the dried dates he had with him. When would he find other food?

For a time he looked warily around, but soon his sense of loneliness overcame his fear, and he watched more for some sign of his four friends than for an indication of an enemy.

"Perhaps some Christian hath escaped, even as I have," thought Timokles.

He started.

Outstretched before him lay a figure of a man! Timokles stood motionless, till he perceived the man be to be asleep. Then the lad bent over the sleeper to scan his face. But, as Timokles stooped, he dimly saw, in the relaxed, open palm of the man's hand, a small stone of the triangular form under which the Egyptians were wont to worship Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Such are the stones found in the tombs of the Egyptians.

This was no Christian sleeper that lay at Timokles' feet! The lad turned and fled into the distance.

Through the desert there wailed a thin, plaintive cry. It was the voice of a night-wandering jackal.

Timokles was dizzy to faintness, and staggered as he was driven on. He had been discovered and taken. His life had been spared that he might henceforth be a slave.

"I bear this for thy sake, O Lord, dear Lord!" murmured the exhausted lad, as the blows drove him through the pathless desert.

Again came the plaintive cry of the wandering jackal.

"For thy sake!" faintly repeated Timokles.

A few minutes passed, and once more the jackal's inarticulate voice wailed through the desert, but Timokles had fallen, helpless. A man sprang forward, and the lash fell again and again on Timokles' prostrate body, but the boy did not stir.

"Now see how the Christian would die in the desert, and cheat us of all the work he might do!" grumbled the vexed voice of a dismounted camel-rider. "He is young. There are many years of work in him!"

"Leave him!" scornfully advised another, who held a torch. "Some beast will find him."

"Nay, but he shall go with me to Carthage," asserted a third, from the height of his camel's back. "Carthage knoweth what to do with Christians!"

"Who art thou that thou shouldest own the Christian?" demanded the first, angrily gazing up at the presumptuous rider. "Did I not find him?"

The mounted camel-rider laughed, and tossed something toward the irate speaker. The man caught the object, a ring of gold, containing a scarabaeus.

"Take it," said the giver to the appeased rival. "The Christian is mine."

The unconscious Timokles was taken up at a sign from the camel-rider to one of his servants, and the cavalcade proceeded on its way. As his camel paced forward, Pentaur, the purchaser, glanced back twice or thrice.

"Truly," he assured himself with much complacency, as he perceived Timokles being carried, "I follow the maxim of Ptah-hotep: 'Treat well thy people, as it behooveth thee; this is the duty of those whom the gods favor.'"

As Pentaur, for that moment, thought of the dread hour when, after death, according to Egyptian belief, he should stand before the judgment-seat of Osiris, the camel-rider felt convinced that he would have merl which might stand him in good stead in that ordeal.

Little by little, Timokles regained consciousness. He marveled to find himself carried. He had expected to be killed where he fell. The many painful welts of the lash's stripes stung him with keen pain.

"O mother! mother!" Timokles' heart cried silently.

Had she indeed lost all love for him, since she had told him she wished he had died rather than become a Christian?

"Lord Christ," cried Timokles' breaking heart now, "I have left all for thee!"

The company pushed on rapidly. At length, after morning with its heat had come, the party halted, and the slave who had carried Timokles flung him on the sand, the slave comforting himself that possibly the evil of the Christian's touch might be warded off by a symbolic eye of Horus that the pagan wore tied to his arm by a slender string. Such eyes were often used by Egyptians as amulets and ornaments.

When the hot hours of the day were past, the caravan again made, ready to go on. The merchant, Pentaur, summoned Timokles, and with condescending good-nature, demanded his history. Timokles told it.

"Why shouldest thou be a Christian?" commented Pentaur. "See, we come to-night to Ammonium the oasis. Every camel-step doth lead thee farther toward Carthage! Thou wilt perish there! Carthage doth hate Christians!"

Timokles looked into Pentaur's eyes.

"Yea, I know that Carthage hateth them," the lad answered. "I heard that four years ago, when the proconsul Saturninus persecuted the Christians; and when a number were brought from the little town of Scillita to Carthage to appear before the tribunal of Saturnin, one man called Speratus spoke frankly and nobly for his brethren. When the proconsul Saturninus invited Speratus to swear by the genius of the emperor, the proconsul promising the Christians mercy if they would do this and return to the worship of the gods, Speratus answered, 'I know of no genius of the ruler of this earth, but I serve my God who is in heaven, whom no man hath seen nor can see. I render what is due from me, for I acknowledge the emperor as my sovereign; but I

can worship none but my Lord, the King of all kings and Ruler of all nations.' So were the Christians taken to the place of execution, where they knelt and prayed, and were then beheaded."

Timokles' eyes fell. His voice trembled.

"O Lord Christ," he added, reverently, "I also would be faithful unto thee!"

The merchant's piercing look regarded Timokles for a few minutes.

"There were women among those twelve Christians who were brought from Scillita to Carthage to die," continued Timokles, "three women, called Donata, Secunda, and Vestina. When they were brought before the proconsul, he said to them, 'Honor our prince, and offer sacrifice to the gods.' Donata answered, 'We give to Caesar the honor that is due Caesar: but we adore and offer sacrifice to God alone.' Vestina, said, 'I also am a Christian.' Secunda said, 'I also believe in my God, and will continue faithful to him. As for thy gods, we will neither serve nor adore them.'

"O my master," continued Timokles, with trembling voice, "thinkest thou not that the God who so strengthened three women that they did not shrink from death for his sake, could strengthen me to meet death, also?"

CHAPTER III.

Pentaur looked fixedly at the lad, who stood with no air of bravado about him, but with an expression of humble trust that the merchant could not fathom.

"Why shouldest thou risk death?" questioned the merchant. "Death will defeat a Christian."

"Nay, O master!" exclaimed Timokles eagerly. "Death may be glorious victory!"

Pentaur smiled.

"Oh!" broke forth Timokles earnestly, "I know a death that was a glorious victory! Carthage knew of it! Didst thou not hear what was done last year at Carthage? Didst thou not know of the Christian lady, Vivia Perpetua, and the Christian slave, Felicitas?"

A shudder ran through Pentaur, as Timokles continued:

"Thinkest thou that what they suffered was nothing? Vivia Perpetua was the best loved of a heathen father's children. How she suffered in her heart, when her old father came to the prison and besought her to give up Christ! 'Daughter,' begged the old man, 'have pity on my gray hairs. Have compassion on thy father!' He wept at her feet. He begged her to have pity on her little child. But she could not give up Christ. Wert thou there, O Pentaur, when the governor examined the prisoners? Didst thou see Vivia Perpetua's old father press forward, carrying her babe in his arms, and beg her to recant for the child's sake? Didst thou hear the judge ask her, 'Art thou then a Christian?' and didst thou hear her answer, 'I am'?"

Timokles paused. Pentaur had groaned. His face was hidden in his hands.

"And then," continued Timokles, "the wretched father, hearing his daughter speak those words that doomed her to death, tried to draw her from the platform. He was struck with a stick, and the judge condemned Vivia Perpetua and Felicitas, with the other Christians, to be exposed to the wild beasts."

Another low groan broke from Pentaur. Timokles hesitated an instant, then hurried on:

"The Christians were to die in the amphitheatre of Carthage. At the gate of the amphitheatre, the guards offered the men among the Christians the red mantle of the priests of Saturn, and offered the women the fillet worn by the priestesses of Ceres. But the Christians refused. 'We have come here,' they said, 'of our own free will, that we might not be deprived of our freedom. We have forfeited our lives in order to be delivered from doing such things.' Even the heathen could see the justice of this, and the Christians were not compelled to wear the things. In the amphitheatre, Vivia Perpetua and Felicitas were put into a net, and allowed to be attacked by a wild cow. Then the two martyrs gave each other the kiss of peace, and a gladiator killed them."

Timokles paused once more. Still no response.

"I remember hearing one thing more concerning Vivia Perpetua," ventured Timokles. "In prison she had had a vision. She thought she saw a golden ladder stretching up to heaven, and on either side of the ladder were swords, and spears, and knives. At the foot of the ladder lay a dragon. Perpetua thought in her vision that she was commanded to mount the ladder. She set her foot on the dragon's head, saying, 'He will not harm me, in the name of Jesus Christ,' and went up

the ladder. At the top she found a large garden, and the Good Shepherd met her."

Pentaur sprang to his feet, and put out a shaking hand.

"No more!" he cried. "Oh, no more! No more! O Vivia, Vivia!"

With a groan of anguish, Pentaur looked upward, as if behind the desert's sky he might see again that youthful face, the face of that sweet Christian with whom he had been acquainted from childhood and whom he had last seen dying in Carthage's amphitheatre. Little did Timokles know how the memory of Vivia Perpetua's death hour had haunted Pentaur. They had been children together in Carthage, and the martyrdom that Vivia Perpetua had suffered in her young womanhood had impressed Pentaur more than all the agony he had seen other Christians endure. When she gave up her life, he had clinched his hands, and muttered fierce words against Carthage's gods, words he afterward trembled to recall. He served those gods now, yet he revered the memory of the Christian, Vivia Perpetua, as of one of the holiest of women.

Timokles ventured no further words.

Pentaur summoned a slave, and committed to his care the young Christian. The memory of Vivia Perpetua might pierce the merchant's soul, but would not avail for Timokles' release.

Bound to another slave to prevent escape, Timokles traveled with the company that night, and before morning the oasis of Ammon, "Oasis Ammonia," was reached. It was a green and shady valley, several miles long and three broad, in the midst of sand-hills. Here, over five hundred years before, had come the founder of Alexandria, Alexander the Great, to visit the oracle of Ammon, the god figured to be like a man having the head and horns of a ram. The statue of Amun-Ra had then been loaded with jewels, through the reverence of the merchants who halted their caravans at this oasis, and who left their treasures in the strong rooms of the temple, while resting the camels under the palm trees.

All this Timokles remembered, as he stood beside the steaming Fountain of the Sun in the oasis, and watched the bubbles that constantly rose to the surface of that famous body of water.

"O branded-cheeked cutter of dykes, art thou in very truth a Christian?" contemptuously asked the slave that guarded Timokles.

"I am, O friend," gently answered the lad.

"Ill shalt thou fare in this oasis, then," threatened the slave.

Timokles' eyes wandered over the landscape. The surface of the oasis was undulating, and on the north it rose into high, limestone hills. Date palms abounded near by Timokles. He could see the inhabitants of the village, and the wanderers from farther, more isolated homes. The oasis was composed of several disconnected tracts, and Timokles heard that in the western part of the oasis there was a lake.

Suddenly the lad became aware of a number of angrily excited voices. At a short distance stood Pentaur the merchant, surrounded by a group of men, but what he said was lost in the confusion of tongues.

At length the merchant made a careless gesture, and walked away.

"Take the Christian!" shouted fierce voices.

A man ran straight from the group to Timokles. Without a word the man seized the lad. Other hands assisted, and Timokles was hurried away from the village, past palm trees and resting camels, toward the north. Breathlessly the men dragged him a long distance over the rising ground. No word of explanation was uttered. Timokles was swept along, till at length the silent, determined company came to a solitary, ruined building.

Timokles was pulled over the fallen stones, across what had once been the court of the dwelling. Then the company reached a spot where part of the house was still standing. Here a barred door shut off further progress, but two of the men with great effort opened the entrance.

All grasping hands fell from Timokles. The company waited.

"Go in, O Christian," commanded, a man. "Others have gone before thee!"

Timokles looked fixedly forward. Before him was a hall-way, leading into the portion of the dwelling-house yet remaining.

Timokles stepped forward. Eager hands pushed him quickly into the hall and shut the door behind him. He heard the sound of bars that fastened the door securely at his back. He was alone. What building was this?

He felt here and there in the dark hall. A peculiar odor floated in the heavy air. Timokles hesitated, fearing he knew not what. His eyes could not pierce the deep gloom.

Resolving to see whither the hall led, he groped on, wondering if this were the place in which the inhabitants of the oasis were wont to confine prisoners. He came to a door. It opened readily to his touch, and he passed into what had once been a large dwelling-room. He stepped softly forward, noting the emptiness and desolation of the place. The peculiar odor of the air was more noticeable than before, but it was not till he had reached the middle of the darkened room, and stood gazing about him, that he perceived at the farther end, in the shadows, a space of yellowish fawn color, and then saw manifold dark spots, also, that shaped themselves into a large, living form.

Timokles drew one quick breath. He softly retreated. Keeping his eyes fixed on the huge, sleeping leopard, Timokles put out his hand to take hold of the door through which he had come. His groping fingers found nothing but the blank wall!

Hastily turning with alarm, Timokles passed his hand over the wall's surface. Surely the door had been here! There was no handle, no line in the wall to indicate the existence of a door.

How silently it had swung shut, when he had come through! He remembered that there had been no noise. He pressed his full force now against the wall. He tried it softly, cautiously, here and there, till he had passed over the entire space in which he knew the door must be, and yet the wall stood apparently blank and whole before him! The other walls seemed to be solid.

With beating heart, Timokles pushed once more at the partition. It remained firm. Trembling with the shock of his sudden entrapping, Timokles looked toward the room's far end. It was as he thought. The beast was not chained. The sleeping leopard's spotted hide heaved softly yet, with undisturbed breathing, and as Timokles watched across the space, he remembered the ominous words spoken to him on his entrance into this building: "Go in, O Christian! Others have gone before thee!"

For a time, overcome by the horror of his situation, Timokles leaned against the partition, the door through which had so mysteriously disappeared. His eyes, between quick glances at the sleeping leopard, searched with desperate intensity every part of the room, for some means of escape.

"Is there no place?" he questioned.

Stealthily he crossed the apartment, and felt of the opposite wall. It was immovable. Nowhere in it could he discover any opening.

The beautiful beast, the waking of which meant so much to Timokles, stirred a little. The claws of one foot were drawn up. Then the foot was relaxed again. The leopard continued to slumber.

High above Timokles were two small windows, closed by wooden shutters. The half-ruined flat roof showed holes here and there where the old palm branches of its construction, covered with mats and plastered with mud, had given way. Had it not been for these holes in the roof, Timokles would hardly have had light enough to perceive the leopard, for the wooden shutters of the two windows prevented their being of much service.

Even with the roof's holes, the room was dark. The rents in the roof were much too far above Timokles to help him to escape; however, and he reflected that if the roof had been lower, the place would hardly have been chosen for the confinement of a wild beast, the present height of the walls preventing the escape of the leopard, as well as that of any Christian.

The leopard stirred again!

"He wakes!" thought Timokles, summoning his courage for that waking.

But the great cat only moved his head to a somewhat more comfortable position, and continued to sleep.

Timokles repassed slowly and silently so much of the walls as was accessible to him. The wall next to the sleeping beast could not be safely examined, yet Timokles, looking through the gloom, noted from his distance no more promising signs than were exhibited by the other three sides of the room. Most of all did he linger about the spot where, it seemed to him, he had entered, and more than once as he touched the surface of the wall, seeking for some hidden spring, he thought he heard behind him the leopard's soft footsteps, but, turning hastily, found himself mistaken.

At length, in his search, Timokles slightly stumbled over some lumps of mud that had fallen from the roof. The crunching sound partly aroused the leopard. With a long-drawn sigh, the drowsy creature stirred and rose slowly to his feet, stretching himself. He did not yet see Timokles.

How beautiful the spotted hide was! Timokles, watching with steady eyes for the instant when he should be discovered, had a fleeting memory of that leopard-skin that covered a seat at home in. Alexandria. He would never sit there again.

Even in these dread moments of suspense, there flashed across Timokles' mind the memory

of the saying of the martyr Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who was sent to Rome to fight with wild beasts: "I am God's wheat; the teeth of the fierce beasts will but bruise me, that I may be changed into the fine bread of my God."

It was the moment of discovery! The leopard had been standing, looking around half sleepily. Now his great eyes spied the lad.

CHAPTER IV.

The beast gave a quick, purring sound of satisfaction. His tail began to sweep to and fro. His hungry eyes were eager.

Timokles stood quiet. The leopard walked slowly forward. Timokles retreated, still facing the leopard. They passed down one wall. They turned, and proceeded along another. They turned again, and passed the third. Now they turned, and this wall was the one that Timokles had not before had opportunity to examine closely, because of the leopard's proximity to it. But now he dared not look from the leopard.

"Oh!" whispered Timokles' pale lips, "what shall I do!"

Suddenly life seemed sweeter to him than ever before. He must not fall into the jaws of this fearful beast! To be caught in this death-trap, and be torn to pieces! It must not be! He did not regret that he had avowed his belief in Christ. He would do such a thing again, if necessary. No less, there grew within him a determination to ward off this beast as long as possible.

"Oh, Lord, help me! Deliver me!" whispered Timokles.

They turned another corner, and once more the two enemies proceeded down the treacherous wall through which Timokles had entered the room. Even as he retreated, Timokles with a last hope kept one hand pushing against this wall. But they reached the other corner, and turned, without any revelation of an opening. The leopard walked leisurely, but steadily. Softly the footsteps of Timokles and the beast sounded in the room, one footfall answering another. Backward, backward, went Timokles—now a turn of a corner—backward, backward. Another corner. This was the wall by which the leopard had slept. Backward, backward! The lad could not pause, but now, as he neared the end of the wall and looked up once beyond the leopard, Timokles saw, in the dark corner that he had passed, what he had not before noticed when near enough to see it, as he had not before lifted his eyes from the leopard. In that farther, dark corner there was a darker line that marked the wall for some distance from the roof.

Timokles dimly perceived that the line was part of one of the old palm branches, that, years ago, had been laid across the split date tree that formed the roof's beam. At the time of the making of the roof, the palm branches had no doubt been securely fastened, and now this portion of a branch which hung down was still attached to the top of the outer wall of the building, but had ceased to be connected with the central split date tree beam, and had fallen inward, hanging near the wall. Did the palm branch hang low enough so that, if he jumped, he could grasp it?

The portion of the old palm branch was a slender thing. It would not have borne the leopard's weight. Probably the animal had tried to clutch the branch before now. The lower end might be frayed by his claws.

"Will the branch bear my weight?" questioned Timokles.

He dared not rush across the room, and leap toward the hanging palm branch. He felt certain that if he should turn his back, the leopard would spring immediately. How quickly the beast was coming! Timokles' head whirled. He was dizzy.

Suddenly the leopard growled. He crouched as if to spring, and Timokles, with a wild cry, fled across the room toward the palm branch. After him rushed the leopard.

Timokles jumped. He grasped the palm branch with one hand. The other brought a handful of frayed bark down. He caught hold of the branch with both hands just as the leopard sprang into the air.

Timokles swung aside as far as possible. A great mass of mud, dislodged from the roof, fell, smiting alike boy and beast, enveloping them in a cloud of blinding dust. The lad clung to the branch with desperate strength, though his support was swaying to and fro. The claws of one of the leopard's paws raked Timokles' arm, and then the beast dropped to the floor.

The leopard's angry cries stunned Timokles' ears. He clutched the palm branch tightly. From the swaying motion and the sound of a slight, though ominous, cracking, Timokles doubted if his support were reliable.

The rage of the leopard was frightful. He seemed beside himself. He leaped and rushed hither and thither, as he saw Timokles climbing higher.

The boy shook with exhaustion. His right arm bled from the wounds of the leopard's claws. He was alarmed lest the old palm branch should break or should loosen from the wall. If he once fell back into the leopard's jaws, there would be a swift end to this skirmishing.

Timokles looked down at the eager eyes. Then he scanned the palm branch narrowly. It did not hang parallel with the wall, but stood out a little from it, and Timokles thought that the branch was partly broken, up next the roof. He hardly dared climb much higher for fear of breaking it entirely off. So he lay along the branch, clasping it with his arms, and shut his eyes. He heard the leopard walk impatiently around, stop, utter an angry cry, walk restlessly again, spring unavailingly into the air, drop heavily to the floor.

At last Timokles opened his eyes. A yellow light, turning into darkness, seemed to fill the space before him. Alarmed, he strove to overcome this faintness. He knew his arm had been bleeding a little, but he had not before this feared unconsciousness. Now he began to feel that he must reach the roof. His faintness might prevent him from clinging to the palm branch much longer.

With Timokles' first motion the leopard was alert again. Timokles climbed cautiously. He was nearing the roof. There was a cracking sound, such as he had heard, before. The leopard moved vehemently. Suddenly the branch cracked so that it swung Timokles against the wall. The leopard's movement sounded like a leap.

Timokles was sure that the branch was giving way. He was nearly to the roof. He clutched at it. The mud-covered, rotten mat that he grasped broke through his fingers, and the dust descended into his face. He grasped again, with the same result. The branch was momentarily growing looser. The leopard was ready.

Timokles grasped again—again—again! The rotten mats and the mud with which they had been plastered came away in great handfuls. He could hardly see, for the descending dust. He grasped blindly, desperately. He felt something firm! It was another palm branch that his fingers reached as he dug through the mud. He held on with the clutch of despair.

His head just reached a hole in the roof. He missed his grasp, and fell back on the swinging, broken palm branch. With one final, cracking sound it parted! Timokles' one hand grasped the top of the wall; his other hand reached the outer part of the roof. He heard the old palm branch fall, and the leopard spring to meet it.

Dragging himself upward, panting with exhaustion, Timokles succeeded in mounting through the hole to the outside of the roof. His foot plunged through a mat. He recovered himself, and crawling to a little distance from the hole, he lay down on the roof. The sun was high in the heavens, but all the world became black to Timokles.

He lay there, faint, for hours. When he could look up at last, the sun was descending toward the west. Far overhead sailed the sacred hawk of Egypt, and the bird's piercing cry, full of melancholy, reached Timokles' ears. The shadow of a palm tree stretched outward and touched him.

"Oh, God!" whispered Timokles reverently, "Thou west Daniel's God. Thou art mine!"

Night had fallen. Timokles, lying in the dark, heard a sound beside the building. Some one was coming!

Timokles crept to the roof's edge farthest from the sound, and lay down.

The head of a man appeared above the roof's level. Evidently he was not accustomed to the roof, for he was very cautious in his movements, and tested every step he took. He carefully approached one of the holes of the roof, and, kneeling, put his face down to the aperture.

The man spoke, and, by his tones, Timokles recognized Pentaur the merchant.

"Oh, Christian!" cried Pentaur into the depth of the building, "livest thou? Ill shall I fare at the judgment of Osiris for this day's deed!"

There was silence.

Perhaps, from the darkness of the room below, Pentaur could see the shining of the brute's eyes, or hear his uneasy stepping to and fro. Something sent a shudder of horror through the man.

"I have taken pleasure in righteousness," he protested. "I have heretofore done no injury to men who honored their gods. Oh, Osiris, I have been righteous!"

There was an awful horror in the man's voice. Timokles was moved with compassion for his former owner, and yet the lad kept silent.

"Shall I speak to him?" Timokles questioned himself. "If he shall be beset in some other place by those who hate Christians, will he not abandon me again to my enemies?"

The merchant waited a moment longer.

"Oh, Osiris!" then he wailed again, "I have been righteous! He was only a Christian!"

The merchant sprang up, and sped toward the edge of the roof where he had first appeared. His foot plunged to its ankle through a weak place in the mats. He shrieked aloud at the fear of falling through into the room below. Hurrying forward, he disappeared down the side of the building. Timokles heard the man running among the fallen stones. The footsteps grew faint, and ceased to be audible.

Timokles drew a breath of thankfulness. He crept and felt in the dark for a few, scattered dates that he had before noticed lying near the roof's edge, the fruit having fallen from a date palm and having lain there till nearly as dry as shards. But there was still nutriment left in the dates, and, having eaten nothing since morning, he gnawed the fruit.

He could not descend by the date palm's trunk, for that was too far from the roof to be reached by him. The palm's straight trunk shot up twenty cubits above the roof's level, and, after the manner of the date palm's growth, bore no branches, such as the doum palm has.

"How did Pentaur climb?" thought Timokles.

The lad passed to the other edge, where the merchant had disappeared. Here, a little lower as yet than the roof, he found a group of young doum palms, the branching stems of which variety of trees he had noticed here and there in forest-like clumps throughout the oasis. Timokles found no difficulty in descending with the doum palms' help, and he reflected that perhaps food for the leopard was often brought up this way, and thrown to the creature through the roof's holes. No one had come to-day with food, because the Christian had been sent to keep the leopard company!

The village, some distance away, was quiet. Scarcely had he gone a score of steps before he saw a star reflected in a spring at his feet. Timokles dropped upon his knees, and with thankfulness drank of the refreshing water. How he had longed for some, as he had lain on the roof under the parching sun this day! He bathed his scratched arm, which had ceased to bleed but still felt very sore.

Carefully Timokles crept over the fallen remnants of the old building. Then he turned from the direction in which the village lay, and set his face toward the northern limestone hills.

He was concealed among them when the sun rose. It would be folly for him to venture out alone upon the desert without food, even if he had water in his small skin bottle. As the morning went by, Timokles saw a few desert hares, but otherwise he was alone. Toward evening, being compelled to find some food, he searched the district, and found, under the stones, the nest of some wild bees. With much difficulty Timokles obtained a little of the honey.

A falling stone attracted Timokles' attention. Turning with quick affright, he saw a woman. There was a startled suspicion in her eyes, as she gazed at him. She held a young gazelle that had strayed away and had been the object of her search near these hills. Suddenly the woman disappeared without a word.

CHAPTER V.

"Let me hide speedily!" Timokles warned himself.

He ran, but shouts arose behind, and before he could conceal himself, two men came running after him. The woman's shrill cry was audible. The men came up with Timokles, and laying hold of him in a manner not wholly rough but still imperative; they brought him back with them to the spot where the woman still stood.

The three looked at him with curious yet not wholly unfriendly eyes, and Timokles felt relieved on seeing that he was not recognized as any one whom they had seen before. This spot was so far from that on which the building stood where he had been given to the leopard, that the lad concluded these people had not witnessed that scene. Pentaur's caravan would have left the oasis before now. Probably the merchant was about to renew his journey at the time of his visit to the leopard's den.

The woman pointed to Timokles' branded cheek. Taking heart from the apparent lack of real hostility in the manner of his captors, Timokles asked for something to eat. He was understood, and the three, taking Timokles, turned from the hills, and proceeded eastward, till, coming to a

black tent near some palms, the woman went in and brought Timokles some barley cakes.

While the boy ate, the two men, still watching him, betook themselves to work. They seemed to be makers of idols. The father was carving a small wooden statuette of the god Thoth. The son worked on a larger idol, the goddess Apet, or Thoueris, in the shape of a hippopotamus walking upright on hind feet. The idol was of green serpentine, and the mother watched with evident pride the skill with which her son worked.

Timokles moved to rise, and instantly the suspicious eyes of the young hippopotamus-sculptor flashed. The father dropped his statuette, and, fiercely springing forward, forced Timokles to the ground, bound him, and went back to the carving of the ibis-head of Thoth.

Beneath the hand of the younger idol-maker, the hippopotamus grew in hideous perfection. Helplessly Timokles watched the process. The mouth of the hippopotamus-goddess was almost shut, but the teeth of the lower jaw were visible, and it was upon their making, as well as upon that of the wide nostrils, that the young man was expending his skill. The huge ears of the goddess descended on the fore-feet, which were placed on the sides of the upright animal, as a man's arms hang by his sides when he walks, and from each of the hippopotamus' arms there descended to the level of her feet the Egyptian emblem of protection, called "Sa."

As Timokles looked at those emblems of protection, a new thought grew within him.

"Women will worship that hippopotamus-goddess and think themselves safe! I worship the God of heaven, and yet I am afraid! Shall I not put as much trust in the delivering, protecting power of my God, as the idol-worshiper will put in this hippopotamus?"

There came the sound of hurried footsteps, and a young girl ran by the black tent, and spoke gayly to the woman. From the resemblance of the maiden to the worker on the hippopotamus, Timokles had no doubt she was his sister. But when the girl, turning her brilliant, laughing face toward Timokles, first saw him, her dark eyes dilated with a look of startled horror.

Timokles knew, as well as if she had spoken, that she was one of those who had seen him dragged to the leopard's home. He looked beseechingly at her now, as she stood transfixed, the shocked expression deepening in her eyes. If she should say a word! Timokles could feel himself tremble. She had thought him dead! She knew him! If she should say so!

The silent appeal of Timokles' beseeching face seemed to find its answer for the moment. The girl turned toward the work of the idol-makers. No one beside Timokles had noticed her frightened gaze. Now, with assumed carelessness, she watched her brother's busy fingers, yet Timokles felt that her thoughts were of him. She had only to speak; to say, "This is the Christian who was thrown to the leopard," and father and son would drop their work, spring upon him, drag him back all the way to the building from which he had escaped, and toss him, bound and helpless, to the leopard.

It was not till nearly dark that the idol-makers ceased their work. Having eaten dried dates and barley bread, the father and the son, first tightening Timokles' thongs, went away in the direction of the far distant village. During their absence, the girl came to Timokles, bringing him water and dried dates.

"Tell me, O Christian," she whispered in the tongue of Egypt, "art thou not he?"

She needed not to make the question more explicit.

"I am, O maiden," answered Timokles. The girl's awe-struck eyes searched his face.

"Did thy God deliver thee?" she questioned, whispering still.

"Yea," replied Timokles reverently and truly. "Yea, O maiden, my God delivered me from the leopard."

The girl looked alarmed. She drew back.

"Did he come to thee?" she asked in a terrified whisper. "O Christian, no one ever before came back from the House of the Leopard! O Christian; I am afraid of thy God!"

There was real terror in her voice. Timokles was moved with compassion. He leaned forward, eager to explain to her the truth. What should he say?

"He is a great God, the only God!" whispered Timokles, reverently. "O maiden, he is not like an idol! He is the only God. Thou canst not see him, yet he seeth and loveth thee. Speak to him, and he will hear. He loveth us. He sent his Son to die for our sins. For that Son's sake, O maiden, he will blot out our sins, if we entreat him. O maiden, pray no more to idols! Lo, I tell you of the true God!"

He hardly knew whether she understood or not. She gazed at him as if half comprehending his words, and then the fact of his having returned from the House of the Leopard seemed to overwhelm every other thought, and she murmured, "O Christian, I am afraid of thy God and thee!"

She fled back to the black tent. Timokles' bound hands made but awkward work of eating. He could hear the voices of the mother and the daughter talking in the mother's tongue, but what they said he knew not. Would the father or the son learn something about their captive?

The voices hushed within the tent. The hours of sleep came on.

The night had grown black. There were footsteps audible.

"They have come back!" thought Timokles.

The father and the son had returned, and with them came another man. Timokles heard and understood something of what was said at the tent's door in the dark.

"If I may but see his face, I shall know whether he hath been here before," declared the new voice eagerly. "I have seen all who have come to our village."

"Thou shalt see him in the morning," impatiently answered the maker of the hippopotamus. "Knowest thou not that on this day I cannot make a flame by which thou shouldest see? It is the eleventh day of Tybi, concerning which it is commanded by the priests of Egypt, 'Approach not any flame on this day; Ra is there for the purpose of destroying the wicked.'"

"I fear no flame!" muttered the new voice discontentedly. "Let me but see the stranger!"

"There shall no flame be kindled!" burst out in wrath the superstitious father. "Bide thou till morning! Then shalt thou see the branded one."

Silence followed. The discontented villager did not dare say more. After a short time, the quietness of slumber seemed to envelop the black tent.

Concealed by the dark, Timokles endeavored with his teeth to loosen the bonds of his wrists. After prolonged attempts, he undid one knot, and by successive wearisome trials he at length entirely released his left hand.

Timokles was near the black tent. It seemed to him that he heard the faintest stir within. But a long silence followed, and he thought he had been mistaken.

Timokles tugged at the thongs of his right hand. His arm was lame from the leopard's claws, and he could not reach the knots that held him. He struggled mightily, till at last he lay exhausted, no nearer free than before.

"I cannot do it!" he despaired.

He must wait for dawn, for recognition, and for death, such death as was thought meet for a Christian. Timokles shut his eyes, and prayed.

"Be with me, be with me, O Lord!" besought Timokles.

Again within the tent he conjectured there might be a faint stir.

"My enemy cometh!" he thought.

But there was silence. Timokles waited, yet there came no sound.

Remembrances of what he had heard concerning former martyrs crowded upon him. He thought of Pothinus, the ninety-years-old bishop of Lyons, who, in answer to the legate's question, "Who is the God of the Christians?" boldly answered, "If thou art worthy, thou shalt know," and was tortured so severely that he died in prison. Timokles remembered hearing of Ponticus, the boy who, in the same persecution, bore all the tortures unflinchingly, though he was but fifteen years old. And Blandina, the maiden, who, tortured, bleeding, mangled, still persisted in her declaration, "I am a Christian! Among us no wickedness is committed," came to Timokles' mind. His thoughts turned to the martyr Christians of four years ago at Carthage, and he remembered the words of one of those Christians: "We will die joyfully for Christ our Lord."

Timokles prayed long and fervently. His heart went back to his beloved Alexandrian home. Heaven would be sweet, but would his dear ones ever know the only way there? Would they ever accept Jesus Christ as their Savior?

"O Lord, help Heraklas to know thee!" prayed Timokles with dropping tears.

Nothing did Timokles know of the roll of the Book of the Christians, the papyrus that had swung from the palm tree in the court at home!

Something made him turn his head. He started, for he saw, stretched out toward him from beneath the black tent, an arm. No more was visible. The black tent descended to the very ground. Looking more closely, he discerned in the hand a knife. For an instant, Timokles thought his enemy was upon him. But it was a small hand, and it was the handle of the knife, not its blade, that was offered to him!

Timokles stretched out his one free hand, and took the knife. The arm disappeared beneath the black tent so swiftly and so noiselessly that Timokles would almost have thought that the sight of the arm had been an illusion had he not held the knife in his left hand. He remembered the girl's words, "O Christian, I am afraid of thy God and thee!"

"Would that I might have told her more of Him!" wished the young Egyptian, as he awkwardly cut at his bonds with the knife.

He was free again! He crept softly away after pushing the knife's handle back under the edge of the black tent. He felt that in the secrecy of the tent one listened who knew he was free.

"Thou didst put it into her heart to save me!" whispered Timokles with a reverent look at the sky.

He knew that as soon as his escape should be discovered there would be instant pursuit, therefore he sought to travel as swiftly as possible.

CHAPTER VI.

Athribis the slave bent lower—lower yet. What was this that he saw? He was on the roof of the house in Alexandria. Through an open space beside the wind-sail next to him, he could look into a small room below.

In that room, his master Heraklas knelt and carefully drew a brick from its place in the wall. Putting his hand into some hole that seemed to be behind the bricks, Heraklas produced a roll of papyrus. He glanced stealthily around, and, kneeling still, unrolled the writing, and read in eager haste, one hand on the brick, ready at the sound of any coming footsteps to thrust the papyrus quickly into the wall again. It was a thing well pleasing to the treacherous soul of Athribis that he should have discovered some secret of his master.

"What is the writing, that he hideth it there?" the slave questioned himself.

Heraklas continued to read. Stretched on his perch, and straining his neck to look, Athribis deemed the time long. His prying eyes noted carefully the distance of the loose brick from the floor. Athribis did not recognize the papyrus as one that he had seen before. The sight of any papyrus, however, had been distasteful to him since the night of his adventure on the roof, but he thought the papyri of that escapade safely burned long ago. He knew that Heraklas' mother had ordered those destroyed that were found on the roof. Athribis supposed the one also burnt that had fallen into the court. What else should have become of it? No suspicion concerning it had crossed his mind till now.

"Oh, that I could see what he readeth!" wished Athribis vainly. "What meaneth that large sign? Is it the 'tau'?"

Heraklas farther unrolled the papyrus, and the mark of the cross that had caught Athribis' eye and had interested him, vanished. The mark seemed to the slave like the Egyptian "tau" or sign of life; used afterwards, curiously enough, by the Christians of Europe as a prefix to inscriptions. Numbers of inscriptions headed by the tau have remained even to the present time, in early Christian sepulchres in the Great Oasis.

"If that were the tau, there may be no harm in the writing," thought Athribis sullenly. "Yet why hideth he here?"

The supposed sign of the tau rolled in sight again, as Heraklas shifted the papyrus.

Heraklas had discovered the papyrus when it hung from the palm in the court. Seeing the character of the writing, he had kept the roll for secret perusal. He conjectured that the thief, supposed to have been on the roof, might have dropped the roll. During the three months that had elapsed since Heraklas found the papyrus hanging from the palm, he had come often to this secret hiding-place. He knew his mother would destroy the Christians' Book, if she saw it. He knew the servants were not to be trusted in the matter.

Frequently, during the first month, he had thought that he would destroy the papyrus, and, as often, he had deferred doing so, so much was he always drawn back to reading it. At the end of the second month, Heraklas read with even more eagerness than at first. Here was something that even the maxims of Ptah-hotep had not attained. Never had Heraklas seen such a book as this Gospel of John. Its words followed him when he was not reading. Why should the words of Jesus of Nazareth cling to one's memory with so persistent a force? Was it true that "never man spake as this man"?

Even when Heraklas passed outside the city streets, and walked the northern cliffs beside the

sea, he was constrained to remember that it was along these craggy places that, men said, a century and a half ago, Mark, the first Christian apostle to Alexandria, had been dragged by cords, at the time of the feast of the god Serapis. Then, tradition said, there had arisen a dreadful tempest of hail and lightning, that destroyed the murderous heathen.

Was the Christian God greater than Serapis, the great deity of Egypt?

Such thinking sent Heraklas back again to study the papyrus of John's Gospel. And now Athribis wearied, waiting for Heraklas' reading to end.

Suddenly Heraklas, attracted perhaps by the silent force that lies in a human gaze; lifted his head from his reading, and glanced upward. Athribis had not time to start aside. The eyes of the two met in a long, piercing gaze! Heraklas sprang to his feet. The papyrus fell, on the loose brick beside him.

Athribis' head vanished instantly, and Heraklas, snatching the papyrus, wound it closely, and thrust it into his garments.

He hastily replaced the loose brick. No safe place for the papyrus would the hole be, hereafter.

When he met Athribis afterwards in a corridor, Heraklas felt his heart beat more quickly against the hidden roll. But the lad was stern in outward semblance.

"Athribis!" he said.

The slave bent before the lad.

"How wast thou where I saw thee?" demanded Heraklas.

"I was attending to the salted quail. Thou knowest they are drying on the roof," explained Athribis, meekly.

Heraklas felt compelled to accept the excuse. There were quail drying, according to the custom of lower Egypt.

"But what was it that I read in his face, as he looked down at me?" Heraklas asked himself.

Thenceforward, unspoken, yet felt as surely as though expressed, there existed in Heraklas' mind a constant suspicion of Athribis.

Heraklas carried the papyrus roll with him, day and night. Well did he know the danger, but he said to himself that he would not be dictated to by a servant. That was the ostensible reason he gave himself for not immediately burning the roll. In reality, he knew that the words of the Christians' Book had pierced his soul. He dared not burn the book. He stood before its searching words a convicted sinner.

The suspicion of veiled surveillance that haunted Heraklas made him cautious of reading his, papyrus at home. He sought places, to read it abroad. Hidden among the crags beside the sea, or in the vines on the banks of Lake Mareotis, Heraklas read, and waged the soul-struggle that had risen within him.

One day Heraklas had hidden himself among the northern crags beside the great sea. His eyes were bent upon his roll. He had been reading John's record of the conversation between Christ and the man who was born blind.

"Jesus said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man whose eyes Christ had opened, answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

It seemed to Heraklas that there came to him, also, Christ's solemn question. With awe-struck lips, Heraklas whispered, out of a heart that craved its answer, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?"

Heraklas bent above his roll. The answer of the Lord was there. "It is He that talketh with thee."

The lad dropped his papyrus, and covered his face. He bowed in awe. For a long time he knelt there, pouring out his soul in prayer—but not to Egypt's gods. And that which is written of the blind man was fulfilled in Heraklas, also—"And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him."

When Heraklas rose from his knees, the sun was high in mid-heaven. It was the time at home when his mother would burn myrrh to the sun. But no prayer to Re or hymn to Horus escaped Heraklas' lips. How should he, who rejoiced in the knowledge of sins forgiven, pray more to false gods?

A holy awe and a great joy wrapped his soul. The burden of sin that had oppressed him, the hopeless burden which had not ceased to cause Heraklas misery even when he made offerings to Isis and poured forth prayers to Serapis, was gone, gone at the touch of Jesus.

Plucking from his girdle his carnelian buckle, that signified to an Egyptian the blood of Isis, said to wash away the sins of the wearer, Heraklas leaned forward, and flung the rosy ornament far into the white foam of the waves below. He could not wear that heathen sign, even though his mother had given the ornament to him.

"O Isis," murmured Heraklas, as he lost sight of the carnelian buckle within the waves, "I care not for thy blood! I know whose blood hath washed away my stain."

With reverent rejoicing, he concealed his papyrus and turned homeward.

He passed into the great city. A woman was worshiping before a statue of the god Chonsu, the moon. Heraklas went by quickly, making no sign of reverence. Glancing back, he saw the woman gazing after him.

A little farther on stood a statue of Anubis. Other men, as they passed, gave homage, but Heraklas did not turn his head toward the idol. He noted, in the stalls and in the shops, the altars and little idols. When he next went to purchase anything, must he do reverence? Heraklas met a beggar and dropped a coin into his hand.

"Isis and Osiris bless thee!" wished the suppliant.

Heraklas' lips parted to answer. Should he, who had been blessed of the Lord, seem to accept the blessing of idols? But the beggar turned to another giver, and Heraklas hurried on his way.

Before he could reach home, a sacred procession came in sight. Already Heraklas could plainly see the leopard-skin that fitted over the linen robes of the Egyptian high priest who was coming. Twelve or sixteen inferior priests walked beside the superior one. The high priest's lock of hair, pendant on one side of his head, became more and more plain to Heraklas with every step of the procession.

"They carry the shrine of the sacred beetle of the sun," suspected Heraklas. "I cannot meet them!"

He turned, and dashed down the first opening that presented itself. The passage led him utterly out of his way.

"But better so," meditated Heraklas, "than that I should have met that skin-dressed priest!"

He stopped an instant. His circuitous way had led him in sight of a spot where he had once seen the Christian woman, Marcella, and her daughter Potamiaena, passing on their way to martyrdom. How awful a form of martyrdom was it that Alexandria visited upon that beautiful Christian daughter! Gradually, hot, scalding pitch was poured over her body, in order that she might endure the utmost torture possible.

Heraklas looked around him at the proud, beautiful city.

"O Alexandria, Alexandria!" he whispered, "in thee is found the blood of the saints!"

For a moment the thought of such a death, as a Christian's punishment, overcame him. Yet he remembered that it was through Potamiaena's martyrdom that the soldier, Basilides, was led to become a Christian also. He refused to take a pagan oath, and was brought to martyrdom.

When Heraklas reached home, he was trembling. His short journey had been freighted with silent meaning.

CHAPTER VII.

Two men passed out of the Gate of the Sun, the northern gate of Alexandria, and came to the docks that bordered the Great Port. The gaze of one man wandered from the promontory of Locrias on the east to the isle of Pharos on the north, and followed back the dyke that connected that island with the docks and marked the division between the Great Port and Alexandria's other harbor, the Port of Eunostus.

"When that ship saileth," remarked the man, indicating a large vessel moored in the Great Port, "some Christians go as ballast!"

"How knowest thou?" asked the other.

The former speaker smiled.

"Thou didst not see a little procession that came through the Gate of Necropolis last evening," he conjectured. "Some Christians brought in from the desert. This ship carrieth them to Rome, to the lions of the arena."

An unbelieving spirit looked from the other man's eyes.

"When the Christians see that ship waiting for them, they will recant," he prophesied. "A man doth not readily take shipping for the port of a lion's mouth!"

"Thou dost not know the Christians," asserted the other. "They are an obstinate people. Our Lord Severus knoweth that right well. See! He hath forbidden all public worship for the Christians. Their great school here bath been scattered. And yet, Christians remain Christians still! It is incredible! Thou didst speak without knowing what hath happened. The Christians have already seen the ship. They are on it! Not one bath recanted. But the ship saileth not for two days yet, and now, the men on board make merry. Hearest thou not their voices?"

A slave passed so near as almost to brush the speaker's apparel, yet the man paid no heed.

But Athribis had heard. For what else but to hear had he this morning stolen down to the docks? He knew of the little company of Christians that had been brought captive to Alexandria, for a slave belonging to another household had told Athribis secretly, "He who was once thy young master—the Christian, Timokles—hath been brought in from the desert and goeth on the ship!"

In his heart Athribis made answer, "The ship needeth another passenger—my young master, the Christian, Heraklas!"

But, as yet, Athribis hardly dared say so, for he had no certain proof to bring of Heraklas' Christianity. If only he could find decisive proof, and bring it before the authorities, what a reward he might hope to have given him!

Yet never, from the day when Heraklas spied Athribis watching the reading of the roll, had the slave, with all his contriving, been able again to catch sight of the papyrus. It was no longer kept in its secret hole behind the bricks. Athribis had looked.

Where else had he not looked? He had hunted the house through as thoroughly as he had been able, snatching a hasty opportunity here and there. If only he could lay hands on that very papyrus! If he could have time to show it to somebody who could read! Deeply had Athribis regretted that he had not been more cautious in his first spying. But now, what hope was there? Athribis had set some of the other slaves of the house to watch, but they had discovered nothing save the old papyri that bad been in the house for years. Some of the slaves could read, and they were sure this was so.

Out on the docks, Athribis stared now at the large mast of the ship, and at the ship's painted eye, and at the sculptured figure of the goddess Isis on the visible side of the ship's bow, both eye and figure, as Athribis knew, being duplicated on the bow's other side. A small boat belonging to the large ship lay floating in the water, but connected with the ship by a rope.

Athribis dared not tarry longer. He hastened home again.

Closer than ever, as he went his morning round of duties, did Athribis watch, but Heraklas was invisible.

"He is not at home. He went away three hours ago," cautiously signaled the slave of the threshold to Athribis.

The slave of the threshold, like Athribis, hated Christians. There was a secret agreement between the two men that if Athribis ever should gain any reward for betraying Heraklas to the authorities, the reward should be evenly divided. Half should belong to the slave of the threshold, in consideration of his having been apparently asleep at times when Athribis went out without permission.

The hours went by and Heraklas did not come, to be spied upon.

That morning, Heraklas had gone out to seek some Christians whom he knew. Two weeks ago he had sought them for the first time to tell them that he wished to join their number. Greatly had he and they rejoiced together.

"Witness a good confession, as did thy brother Timokles," an old man admonished Heraklas.

Almost daily, since then, Heraklas had sought some Christian who taught him more perfectly the way of the Lord.

Today, as Heraklas sat in a house, secretly studying another portion of the Book than was written on his own papyrus, a Christian woman came hastily to him, and told him the tidings concerning his brother.

"He hath assuredly come!" affirmed the woman. "Vitruvius saw him carried to the ship with other Christians!"

The before eagerly-read papyrus dropped from Heraklas' hand. He grew weak and faint. The woman looked at him pityingly.

A wild impulse seized Heraklas. He rushed from the house to the street. His brother, his Timokles, back again! Back from the desert! Back in his city-home of Alexandria! And not to be allowed to draw one free breath, to come back to the house, to see Cocce, to see him, Heraklas! What could be done! What could be done! To be taken to Rome to meet the lions!

Heraklas ran toward the northern gate. He bethought himself of caution, and tried to go with his usual step. He passed through the Gate of the Sun, and by discreet inquiries discovered which ship the Christians were on. Then he hid himself near one of the docks, and watched the ship.

Two days! One of the days partly gone already! Timokles would go away never to return, surely, this time.

"I also am a Christian!" cried Heraklas aloud.

Only the swaying of the water against the dock answered him. He sprang up and walked out on the dyke that stretched toward the isle of Pharos. Opposite him, the ship showed still more plainly than from the docks. Heraklas made out the prayer inscribed on the vessel: "Do thou, O Isis, preserve in safety this ship over the blue waves."

"O Timokles! Timokles!" cried Heraklas, as he stretched his hands toward the ship.

Heraklas walked the dyke till the burning sun of noon forced him to find shelter. He went back to his hiding place at the docks. He watched and waited through the long hours.

At length the day departed. When the darkness covered the surface of the harbor, Heraklas rose and girt about him the ample dress he wore, of fine linen, that descended to his feet.

He slipped softly into the water, and swam toward the ship. Reaching the small boat that floated by the ship, Heraklas drew himself up into the little craft.

He listened to the lap of water on the side of the ship. A sudden joy shot through Heraklas that they were so near together, Timokles and, himself. It was for this he had stayed outside Alexandria till the gates were shut. It were better to be a homeless Christian on this water than to linger in godless Alexandria!

He heard sounds of revelry on shipboard. Heraklas pulled on the rope that fastened the small boat to the ship. The rope was stout and well-fastened.

In the dark, he began to climb the rope with trembling fingers. Now he hung by the side of the ship, and now, one hand above another, he drew himself higher, higher, till he grasped the ship's side. He struggled over it, and dropped down on board in the darkness. He waited. No one came. He heard sounds of men that laughed and talked loudly.

He crept a little distance. A rope dangled in his face. He found himself under the aperture where the buckets for bailing were worked. After long and careful groping, Heraklas concealed himself in the vessel's hold, and waited. He suspected that the Christians were in the hold, but he was afraid to search far.

He had not been long hidden before he heard near him the sound of a great sigh and the rattling of a chain, as of some animal half-wakened from sleep.

"It is some wild animal that is to be taken to Rome," suspected Heraklas, not without a little uneasiness at his own proximity to the beast.

It was likely that the creature was well secured, yet the lad crept farther away. He could hear the sound of feet above him and the laughter of men who, no doubt, were drinking on this almost their last night in port.

A sound came from another portion of the hold, and Heraklas listened, trying to discover whether the living being in that direction were a beast or a person. While he listened, a faint light began to shine in the hold. There descended softly into the hold two men, one bearing a light. Heraklas drew back farther into the darkness. The men passed on, their light held so that Heraklas did not see their faces. But the hasty glimpse that the lad had of his surroundings told him that the beast he had crept away from was a lion that was securely caged in one portion of the hold.

Softly the two men proceeded toward the direction from which Heraklas had heard sounds. Stealthily Heraklas rose. He surmised where the two men were going. He wished, yet hardly dared, to follow.

The light swung one side. One man turned to speak to the other, and the light fell full on the speaker's face.

Heraklas leaped softly forward, and followed without hesitation. For the face he had seen was the face of Athribis!

There were eight of the Christians. Heraklas, peering from a distance behind, saw the light held high, as the men paused beside the Christians. Absolutely exhausted, most of them, by the forced march of the desert, and by the lack of enough food, they were asleep, and Heraklas noted with a great pity their gaunt faces.

Athribis bent eagerly forward, scanning one worn countenance after another.

"Hold the light this way—more this side—here!" he said.

Athribis laid his hand on one sleeper's shoulder, and turned him, slightly.

"This is he!" joyfully exclaimed Athribis. "This is he! I had feared he was not among these, after all. This is he! I would know him anywhere! I never saw that brand, though. That is what made him look differently to me at first. But this is he! This is he!"

"Cease thy prating!" warned his companion, fearfully. "If the men of this ship were not so drunk, thou wouldest have little time to talk! Thinkest thou I care nothing for my head? Hasten! Wake him, if thou wilt, but hasten! Thinkest thou the petty coin thou gavest me will pay me for my head? Hasten! They think I am guarding these prisoners safely."

"Small time wilt thou spend guarding them, if thou knowest where aught is to drink!" responded Athribis sarcastically. "How much hast thou drank today?"

The wearied Timokles slumbered on, regardless of the light and talking.

Back in the dark, Heraklas clasped his hands. A mighty sob rose in his throat. The Christian was indeed Timokles! How worn he was! And that brand upon his cheek!

Athribis bent forward. Timokles' eyes were opening.

"Athribis!" exclaimed Timokles faintly, as, after a prolonged gaze, he recognized the slave.

"Ah, my Christian master! My Christian master!" jeered Athribis, "I see you once again. My Christian master!"

The hands of the unseen Heraklas clinched at that tone.

Timokles looked around, bewildered. A quiver passed over his lips. Athribis reminded him of home.

"Is my mother here?" asked Timokles. A sorrow deeper than tears looked from his eyes.

Athribis smiled. "Thy mother!" he said.

The tone was a sufficient answer. Timokles' eyes fell.

"Thou wilt never see her again," went on Athribis. "Thy mother hateth thee! She is faithful to Egypt's gods, if thou art not! I came here only to be certain thou wert on the ship."

"Camest thou from her to me on that errand?" asked Timokles calmly.

Athribis laughed, and turned to go.

"Farewell, my Christian master! Farewell!" said the slave, mockingly.

There was an instant's silence. The great lion sighed from his cage.

Then answered Timokles' low voice, "O Athribis, may my God become thine, also!"

A laugh came, as the slave's reply. Athribis and his conductor went away. The light faded from the hold.

Heraklas crept near the Christians.

"Timokles!" he whispered. "Timokles! O Timokles, my brother!"

CHAPTER VIII.

From the bound Christians came no answer to Heraklas' cry, though there was a startled movement among them.

"O my brother! my brother!" murmured Heraklas, the tears running down his face in the dark, "I am Heraklas! I, too, am a Christian!"

"Heraklas!" cried Timokles, "Heraklas! How camest thou hither?"

"Peace!" whispered Heraklas in terror. "Thou wilt be heard!"

Heraklas cast his arms about his brother and clung to him.

"How art thou bound, my Timokles?" asked Heraklas, when they had embraced and wept together.

"My feet are bound with naught but cords, but a chain about my body fasteneth me to a hook in the wall," answered Timokles. "Thou canst not release me, my brother! Flee, while thou canst!"

"Nay, but I will try," whispered Heraklas resolutely.

He drew his knife from his girdle, and feeling of the cords that bound his brother's ankles, cut the knots. Timokles sighed with relief, as he moved his cramped feet. The feet of two of the other Christians were bound with thongs, and these Heraklas cut also, but the other five Christians were bound hand and foot with chains, and for them Heraklas' knife could not avail. Timokles and the other two had been considered weaker in body, or else the persons who secured the Christians had been in haste to join the reveling of the mariners, and had thought cords strong enough. Yet what availed it that the feet of any of the Christians were free, if their bodies were securely bound?

"Thou hast done all thou canst, Heraklas," whispered Timokles. "Go now, my brother. O my Heraklas, I rejoice thou art a Christian! Go! We shall meet again in the kingdom of our God!"

"I will never leave thee," answered Heraklas, firmly. "The men are drinking themselves senseless. I will try what I can do."

He felt the wall till he found that Timokles' chain was held, not by a hook, but a staple. It was only after long labor with his knife around this staple that it shook a little in its hold on the wall. Then Heraklas seized the staple, and swung his whole weight upon it, and dug his knife into the wall like a madman. He worked with perspiration standing on his forehead, his breath coming in pants. Furiously, with all his strength, he dug and pulled till the staple yielded, and he fell down among the prisoners. But the drunken men on deck did not hear.

Heraklas labored on, till at last he threw his arms about his brother.

"Stand up, my Timokles," he begged. "See if thou art not free!"

Timokles arose. Nothing hindered him.

"O Heraklas!" he whispered, trembling with excitement.

"Sit down again and rest, till I help our brethren, also," whispered his brother.

But though Heraklas toiled with all his remaining strength, he succeeded in releasing but one other Christian.

"Leave us," urged the others.

"O my brethren," answered Heraklas with a sob, "would that I could save you!"

But the six Christians answered steadily, "Why weepest thou, brother? We but go to our Father's house before thee."

Then he whose feet Heraklas had released, thanked him most heartily, and all said farewell.

Hours had gone by since Heraklas first came on board the ship. Cautiously he and Timokles and the other Christian crept out of the hold. Every movement of their own affrighted them, though they knew a drunken stupor rested on some of the ship's company. One after another the three fugitives finally slipped into the water. Heraklas bore up Timokles, who swam but weakly. The third Christian was feeble, but he made headway, and in slow fashion they came at length to the docks of Alexandria.

By this time it was long past midnight. That Timokles or the third Christian, whose name was Philo, should enter the city was not to be thought of, since they would be recognized and retaken. After consultation it was agreed that Timokles and Philo should proceed along the edge of the sea in an easterly direction and hide themselves at a point agreed upon, on the coast, a distance from the city. Heraklas was to enter into Alexandria at the earliest dawn and was, if possible, to send a message to his mother. He was to obtain an amount of food, such as he could carry without exciting suspicion, and was to met his brother and Philo at the appointed place on the sea-shore. Then they were to flee.

Heraklas went with the others a little way. It seemed as if he could not part from Timokles.

Who knew if they should ever meet again?

In the house where Heraklas' mother dwelt, a receiving-room for visitors looked upon the court, but a row of columns led inward to a private sitting-room, which, after the manner of the Egyptians, stood isolated in one of the passages. In this isolated room, the mother sat on a stool of ebony, inlaid with ivory. Beside her lay a papyrus on which was written part of the Sacred Book of the Christians. The face of the proud woman was hidden in her hands.

Before her stood a messenger who had brought her the following writing from Heraklas:

"O my mother, forgive thy son! I have found Timokles! He is weak; nigh, I fear, to death. O my mother, I also am a Christian: Read, I pray thee, the papyrus I send. It is part of the Christians' Book. We flee, with other Christians, from Alexandria, today. Farewell."

The mother lifted her face, and her cry rang through the room, "O my sons, my sons!"

She had execrated Timokles at times when she had spoken of him before Heraklas, and he had thought that the execration came from her heart. But she had longed, with pain unspeakable, to see Timokles once more. And now, when she knew that he had been in Alexandria, that he needed a mother's care, that Heraklas, also, had owned allegiance to the Christians' God—when she thought of Christians burned, beheaded, given to wild beasts—when she realized that perhaps she should never see again the face of Timokles or Heraklas, the heart of the mother broke within her, and she wailed, "O my sons! My sons!"

"Hush!" warned the messenger, quickly. "Thy slaves will hear thee!"

The mother seized the messenger's arm.

"Tell me where my sons are," she begged. "I will go to them!"

The messenger looked piercingly at her. He, a Christian, had risked much to bring her this message. Dare he trust this woman, known to be a devout worshiper of Egypt's gods? Would she not betray the fleeing Christians?

"What is it, my mother?" he asked gently.—See page 37.

"Tell me where my sons are!" besought the mother with tears. "Oh, tell me! I cannot lose them! What is my home to me without them? I will not betray any Christian! Only tell me; and let me see my sons again!"

Then the messenger saw in the mother's eyes that she spoke truthfully, but he said, "How can I trust thee?"

"I swear by Isis!" implored the mother.

"Nay," returned, the messenger gravely, "it is not meet that a Christian should bind any one by a heathen oath."

The mother cried out, and besought him, declaring that she would depart from Alexandria, if her sons could not dwell there.

"They cannot, except they risk death," stated the messenger "Thou knowest Timokles' life is forfeit. Knowest thou not how many Christians have fled, and what torments Christians who have been brought here from all Egypt have suffered? Wouldst thou thy two sons should suffer in like manner?"

"I will go into exile with them," answered the woman.

"How wilt thou leave this, thy beautiful home?" asked the messenger.

"I will leave it in the care of my kinsmen," she replied.

"It may never be thine again," warned the messenger.

"Hear me, O Christian!", cried the mother passionately "I know not the Christians' God, but the Emperor Severus shall not take away my sons! I care not if he takes my home!"

"Come then with us," answered the messenger. "I trust thee! May the Christian's God cause thee to know Him!"

That day there passed through Alexandria's streets a chariot drawn by two mules. Seated in the chariot a lady and a child rode in state. The charioteer was only a small lad.

Out of the city by the eastern gate, as they had passed so many times before, Cocce and her mother rode. Who would hinder so devout worshipers of the gods from taking a pleasure drive? Alexandria knew nothing yet of Heraklas' defection.

When Alexandria was some distance behind, the lady spoke.

"Stop the chariot," she commanded.

The young lad obeyed. The woman and child descended to the road.

"I would walk," said the woman. "Drive thou home again, and say thou naught. See, here is something for thee."

She gave him some money.

The lad did as he was bidden. The mother of Heraklas had known whom to choose for her charioteer this day.

The chariot receded. It passed out of sight. A distance away from the road, a man rose and beckoned. It was the messenger of the morning, disguised, as a beggar.

They went northerly toward the sea. The mother's straining eyes looked ever forward. How if the Christians had been discovered! How long the way was!

A faintness seized upon her as they neared the sea. What if her sons were not there? She hurried forward.

The sea splashed on the rocks at her feet. The salt splay blew in her face. They were not here! They were not here!

Out of the recesses of the rocks, some forms arose, and Heraklas, as in a dream, saw his mother, his proud mother—she who had burned incense to the sun, she who had once held the sacred sistrum in Amun's temple, she who had taught him to worship Isis, and Osiris, and Horus, and the River Nile—his mother throw her arms about Timokles, and kiss his scarred cheek, and sob on the young Christian's neck, "O my son, I have missed thee so! I have missed thee so!"

Some ten months later, on the desolate, uninhabited western shore of what the Hebrews called "Yam Suph, the Sea of Weeds," known now as the Red Sea, in the country spoken of by the Romans as part of Ethiopia, now named Nubia, a little company of Christians made ready their evening meal.

Down on the shore a little girl sang. Her voice rose exultantly in a hymn of the early Christians:

"Blessed art thou, O Lord; teach me thy judgments.

"O Lord, thou hast been a refuge for us from generation to generation.

"Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.

"Thou hast healed my soul in that I have sinned against thee."

"O Lord, to thee I flee for refuge. Teach me to do thy will Because thou art my God; Because thou art the fountain of life In thy light shall we see light. Extend thy mercy to them that know thee."

Timokles went toward the shore to call Cocce. As he returned, he saw his mother standing a little apart from the other Christians and gazing toward the northwest, in the direction of Egypt, as she had often gazed since the Christians took refuge here.

"She misseth her home," thought the young man sadly. "It is but a rough abiding-place here for her. And yet Severus hath not found us. I would that she had come here for the love of Christ, and not for love of her two sons, only! Then she would feel, as the others of us do, that there is no one who hath left house or lands for our Lord's sake, but receiveth a hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. Oh, I would that my mother might know how near our Lord can be, even in this desert!"

His mother had ceased to speak of Egypt's gods. She had even read somewhat in the Christians' Book. But to Timokles she seemed no nearer to accepting Christ than when she was in Alexandria. How little we know of the heart-experiences of those persons nearest to us!

Timokles drew nearer. His mother heard his step, and turned toward him, but in place of the homesick longing he had expected to see in her eyes, there was a look that thrilled his soul.

"What is it, my mother?" he asked, gently.

"Timokles," she answered softly, "I was thinking but now of Alexandria and of our dear home there. Timokles, if God had not driven me into the desert, would I ever have found him?"

Timokles trembled with exceeding joy. Could she be speaking of the real God, not of Egypt's idols?

"Hast thou found Him—the Christian's God—my mother?" he asked tremulously.

A holy awe looked from his mother's face.

"Did not his Son say, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out'?" she answered. "I have come to him, Timokles—even I, the former worshiper of Isis—and he hath not cast me out."

"O my mother!" murmured Timokles, overcome by the glad tidings. "What more can I ask of him than this!"

The sun sank, and Heraklas raised for the little company the evening hymn of the early church. His mother's voice rose clear and sweet, as all sang:

"Children, praise the Lord, Praise ye the name of the Lord. We praise thee, we hymn thee, we bless thee, Because of the greatness of thy glory. O Lord the King, the Father of Christ, Of the spotless Lamb who taketh away The sin of the world, To thee belongeth praise, To thee belongeth song, To thee belongeth glory, to the God And Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, To the Most Holy, unto ages of ages. Amen."

However long their exile might be, whatever privations they might suffer in this desert place, the little company could sing their praises with gratitude, for now not one voice of their number would be silent. Here they would abide, telling of Christ to every heathen wanderer whom they could seek out in these wilds. And if it should please God that henceforth Egypt might never hold a home for them, yet they could dwell in the deserts beyond Rome's dominion, knowing that He who when on earth had no place to lay his head would be with them. He had delivered the last one of the little company from the snare of false gods.

THE SQUASH OF THE ESVIDOS.

Black dog slipped through a swinging gate and Miss Elizabeth followed him into an olive, orchard of small dimensions. The family to whom the black dog belonged was there. The father, Bernardo Esvido, stood on a step-ladder, picking black olives into a bucket half filled with water, the bucket being fastened to Mr. Esvido's waist so that he might use both hands, while the water in the bucket prevented the ripe olives from being bruised. He who picks ripe olives into a hard bucket knows not his business.

Beneath another olive tree sat the mother, the daughter, and the son, washing olives in a water-trough. The small black dog raised his voice, and did his best to inform the Esvidos that a stranger eyed their olive-washing.

"You read Portuguese?" asked Miss Elizabeth, smiling on the busy group. Miss Elizabeth was not a book-agent, but, moved by the religious destitution of the Portuguese, she had devised the plan of buying at some city book-store Bibles or Testaments in Portuguese, and then going into the surrounding country and hunting for Portuguese who could read. To such, on account of their poverty, Miss Elizabeth often sold for ten cents a Bible she had bought for forty or sixty cents. She would gladly have given the Bibles free, but from observation she had become persuaded that those Portuguese who paid a few cents for a Bile were much more likely to read it than were those to whom one was given for nothing.

At Miss Elizabeth's question the united Esvido family looked at the mother. She was the one reader of the group. Many Portuguese do not read, either in English or in their own language. If a Portuguese woman reads Portuguese, her neighbors perhaps know of her accomplishment. Mr. Esvido was proud that his wife knew how to read Portuguese even if he was ignorant. None of the family could read English.

"You like buy Biblia Sagrada?" (Holy Bible) questioned Miss Elizabeth. "It is all Portuguese."

The red book was passed to the mother, who shook olive-leaves and dust from her hands, and took up the Bible. She had dimly known that there was such a book. She remembered hearing of the Biblia Sagrada years ago, when she was a girl in Lisbon, long before she came to California; but none of her acquaintances had such a book, and she had never before to-day seen a Portuguese Bible.

But at last the book was handed back to Miss Elizabeth.

"No money," carelessly explained Mr. Esvido.

The oil-maker who bought the crops of the local olive-growers had not yet paid for the olives. Even ten cents was not in Mr. Esvido's pocket, just now.

Miss Elizabeth looked around. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Esvido seemed very anxious about the Bible, but Miss Elizabeth felt anxious for them. A woman who could read Portuguese ought to have a Bible, and she ought to pay something for it in order to interest her in it thoroughly. Miss Elizabeth's eyes spied a yellow squash. She did not want it, but it would be payment.

"You give me squash, I give you Biblia Sagrada," she proposed.

"How you take it?" asked Mr. Esvido, smiling.

Miss Elizabeth opened her hands with a gesture that showed she meant to carry the squash, hidden as much as possible under her short cape.

"We make trade," agreed Mr. Esvido; and Miss Elizabeth, leaving the Bible, bore the big squash away.

But Miss Elizabeth's yellow burden became very heavy before she had gone far on the long country road. She found at last a wandering piece of newspaper, which she wrapped over as much of the vegetable as possible. The rest her cape covered, and then she marched on toward the far wires of the electric car-line that had brought her into the country. So vanished the squash of the Esvidos from their eyes.

Meantime the Portuguese mother read aloud from the Bible. The daughter, Delpha, listened, while gently rubbing the black olives in the water-trough. She knew of Christ, yet the words of the Biblia Sagrada were unknown.

After this, Mrs. Esvido read the book much in the evenings. Delpha and Mr. Esvido listened, the father listening more because just now he had not his pipe for company. The American who bought the olives declared that no one who picked olives for him must smoke during olive harvest! All his workmen, even when off duty, must refrain from smoking, for the tobacco odor clung to clothing. The olives would absorb tobacco smoke. The oil would be spoiled. Mr. Esvido grumbled much, but obeyed. There was a warning in the fate of the neighbor, Antone Ramos, who in last year's olive season had thought one evening to smoke a pipeful of tobacco secretly, and lo! the American, ever watchful, came to Antone Ramos' house that very night, and the tobacco smoke was perceptible! Antone Ramos was discharged!

Therefore, during this year's olive harvest, Mr. Esvido, with a cautious respect for the American's preternaturally, acute perception concerning tobacco, refrained from smoking, and found solace in listening with Delpha to Mrs. Esvido's evening readings from the Biblia Sagrada. It seemed marvelous to Mr. Esvido that his wife could read. The marvel of it had never lessened for him, and one night he said proudly, "We make good bargain when we give squash for Biblia Sagrada! Biblia Sagrada ver' good book."

One day Mrs. Esvido read something that startled Delpha. Site could hardly believe it possible that her mother hid read aright.

The words in the Portuguese language were these: "Amai a vossos inimigos, fazei bem aos que vos tem odio." (Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.)

Alas! Delpha knew whom that meant.

There had long been a deep-seated quarrel between her and Sara Frates. Thinking of this bitter animosity, Delpha felt keenly the command, "Fazei bem aos que vos tem odio."

Olive harvest went on. The Esvido olives were gathered. Then Delpha and Sara and others went to work in the American's costly olive-oil mill, scalding the mill-stones and the crushing troughs daily, sweeping the scraps of olive skins from the floors, and scalding the floors to keep every odor away from the precious olive oil. Before beginning this season, the walls of the building had been given a coat of whitewash, and now a wood fire must not be lit anywhere near the premises, for the precious olive oil might take a smoky taste.

It was therefore with great wrath that Delpha, who was careful to obey rules, found one day, in a crushing trough under her supervision, some scattered little pieces of iron. Now iron must never be allowed to come in contact with olive juice. The tannic acid in the olive juice acts very rapidly on the iron, producing a kind of ink, that turns the oil black and almost ruins it. The American's crushing troughs and weights were of granite. Delpha was sure Sara had scattered the pieces of iron in the crushing trough on purpose to bring Delpha into trouble.

"I do something to her!" resolved Delpha fiercely. "I pay her for this!"

Then she remembered, "Fazei bem aos que vos tem odio." (Do good to them that hate you.) To Sara's amazement, Delpha did not retaliate. Sara could not understand why.

Toward the end of the olive season, the American went away for a day. During the noon rest, Delpha, sitting in a side door, thought she caught the odor of smoke. No wood fire was allowed around the oil-mill! Delpha went out to investigate.

She saw a film of smoke rising from a gulch. Delpha discovered that some of the young mill-workers' friends had caught some fish in the bay sparkling in the distance, and had brought them this way going home. The American being absent, the young mill-workers and their friends had made a fire in the gulch, and were merrily broiling fish. Sara was there, disobeying rules with the others.

Delpha ran back to the oil-mill. She hoped the fire's smoke would not injure the oil. She was troubled as she dropped in the door. But she could do nothing.

By and by she heard screams. She sprang up. Sara came running around the mill. Her dress was on fire!

"Delpha! Delpha!" she screamed, "Delpha, help me!" She seemed crazed with fright.

"Fazei—bem—aos—que—vos—tem—odio!"

Did a voice say it to Delpha? She snatched a great canvas bag used for olive-picking, and a shawl. She ran to Sara. She breathlessly tore at the blazing garments, rolling Sara in the shawl and canvas bag. Blackened, sobbing, Sara lay at length safe on the ground. Delpha ran for water and olive oil.

As Delpha gently spread some olive oil on the burns, Sara flung her arms about Delpha's neck.

"Amiga!" (friend) she sobbed, and the enmity between the girls was over.

Miles away, Miss Elizabeth one day said to herself, "I don't believe we can ever use that squash I brought home from those Portuguese! But anyhow the squash made that Portuguese woman feel that she paid for the Bible! I hope she reads it, poor soul!"

But Miss Elizabeth did not know the whole story of the squash of the Esvidos, or of the message that the Biblia had brought to Delpha's heart.

THE VERSE MARTIN READ.

Martin put his bare feet down through the thick dust of the country road. It was warm summer, and he was used to going barefoot, even to Sunday-school, from which he was now returning. Over the hot, dry grass of the fields there swayed at frequent intervals the heads of California wild oats. One such stem grew near the road, and Martin, with a quick sweep of his hand, pulled off the wild oat heads and went on through the dusty road, scattering the oats as he walked. Martin was thinking.

"Teacher doesn't know how 'tis," he said. "I have to carry 'round milk mornings and nights, and I have to go down to the barn to hunt eggs, and I have to help pa about the stage horses, and sometimes I have to ride the horses back to be shod, and I have to walk a mile to day-school and back, and learn my lessons, and I'd like to know how teacher thinks I've got much time to read the Bible some every day. There's lots of days I don't believe pa reads any in the Bible. He's too busy driving the stage and 'tending to the horses. And ma doesn't read it, because she has to cook for the teamster boarders. It's a real pretty book teacher's given me, though."

Martin felt inside his jacket, and brought out a little New Testament. It was only a ten-cent Testament, for Miss Bruce, his Sunday-school teacher, did not have money enough to buy Bibles for her class of thirteen boys. She had felt that she must do something, however, for the boys were destitute of Bibles of their own.

The best she could do was to buy small Testaments with red covers, and she had cut a piece of bright red, inch-wide ribbon into thirteen lengths, had raveled out the ends so as to make fringe, and had put a piece of this fringed ribbon into each boy's New Testament for a book-mark. The boys thought a great deal of the pieces of ribbon, they were so bright and pretty. Miss Bruce had written some special little message to each boy in the front of his Testament. The general purport of each message was that the book was given with the teacher's prayer that the boy might learn to love the Bible and might become a real Christian. Some of the boys let the others read what was written in the Testaments, and some boys did not.

Miss Bruce had given them the Testaments to-day, and had said that she hoped each boy would read a little, daily, in his Testament, even if it were only two or three verses.

"I wonder if teacher'll ask me next Sunday whether I've read any?" Martin questioned himself now, as he admiringly eyed his piece of red ribbon. "It'll be a shame if I have to tell her, the first Sunday, that I've forgot it! I'd better read one verse now, so I can say I read that, anyway, if I forget the rest of the week."

Martin sat down beside the road. He was not a very good reader. This was the first piece of the Bible Martin had ever owned. There was an old, unused family Bible at home. A red Testament, was much more attractive to Martin.

"Where'll I read?" Martin asked himself now. "I want an easy verse. Some of them look too

hard."

He began and dropped several verses, because of their difficulty. Finally he settled on one, because of its shortness. He read its seven words haltingly but carefully.

"'L-e-s-t'—I don't know that word—'c-o-m-i-n-g'—coming—'s-u-d-d-e-n-l-y—he find you s-l-e-e-p-i-n-g.' 'Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.'"

Of the connection of the verse, and its spiritual significance, Martin knew nothing. The word "l-e-s-t" puzzled him. He would ask somebody about it.

When he helped his father with the horses at the barn that evening, Martin questioned his father about the word "l-e-s-t."

"Haven't you spelled it wrong?" asked his father. "I guess it's 'l-e-a-s-t'—'least'—smallest."

"It's in my new red book," answered Martin, perching on the watering trough. "I'll find the place."

Martin did not know much about New Testament books or chapters, but he knew that verse was on the eighty-second page. Martin had noted the little numbers at the bottom of the pages.

"Here 'tis!" triumphantly exclaimed Martin.

His father took the book. Martin's eager finger pointed to the verse.

"Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping."

The words faced the stage-driver. Well did he know their meaning. Years ago in his mother's home he had been taught from the Bible. His eyes now ran over the preceding verses. He caught parts of them. "The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey." "Watch ye therefore." "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh." "Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping."

"Don't you know what 'l-e-s-t' means?" asked Martin, eager for the explanation.

"Oh—why, yes," responded his father. "It means 'For fear' he should come suddenly."

"Who?" asked Martin.

"The Lord," returned his father gravely.

"Why shouldn't they be sleeping?" asked Martin.

"Who?" said his father, turning to attend to the horses.

"I don't know," said Martin. "I mean my verse."

"Martin," stated the stage-driver, "I'm no hand at explaining. Don't ask any more questions."

Every Sunday after this Miss Bruce persisted in asking whether the boys read in their Testaments.

"It's mean the way some of the boys don't read any, after her giving us all nice red Testaments," Martin told his father. "I don't read much, but I ought to read some, after her fringing that red ribbon! Most verses I read are short, like 'Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.'"

The stage-driver moved uneasily at the words.

"He hasn't forgot that verse after all these weeks?" thought the man.

"I know what that verse means now," went on Martin. "Miss Bruce told me. She says some folks forget they've got to die, and they ought to be ready for that. A good many folks don't become Christians, and Miss Bruce says she's afraid they'll be like that verse, 'Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.' You and I won't be that way, will we, father? I'm going to try to be ready. Ain't you? Miss Bruce says folks ought to always be."

His father's eyes were on the harness he was buckling.

"I hope you'll be ready, Martin," answered the father, "even if I ain't."

The place where Martin lived was a small settlement distant from town. Martin's father, Mr. Colver, not only three days in the week drove the stage, but other days acted as a sort of expressman, bringing freight in a large wagon over the miles from town. One night about nine o'clock, Mr. Colver was on the long, lonely road coming toward home. He had a very heavy load on his wagon. The wheels scraped on the wagon bottom, and the team went with a heavy, dragging sound.

As the heavy wagon came opposite a clump of white blossoming buckeye trees, one of the

fore wheels of the dragging wagon suddenly gave way and fell off. Mr. Colver was thrown violently from the wagon's high seat into the road, among the tumbling heavy boxes and barrels. The sharp corner of one box struck Mr. Colver's head near the temple.

The weary horses waited to be urged forward again. They did not know that their driver lay insensible in the road.

It was early gray morning before one of the teamsters who boarded at the Colvers' found Mr. Colver lying still insensible, and brought him home. The blow on the head had been a very dangerous one. Martin gazed awestruck at his father's shut eyes and unconscious face.

"I wonder if pa's going to die?" the boy anxiously thought. "I wonder if pa's ready?"

The sorrowful hours came and went. Mr. Colver regained consciousness, but for weeks he felt the effects of the blow that might have smitten him never to rise.

One night when Martin was going to his room, his father called weakly to the boy.

Martin turned back. He found his mother sitting beside his father.

"Martin," said his father with grave earnestness, "your mother's been reading to me from your Testament. We've been talking about Bible things that we haven't paid much attention to. We were both brought up better, Martin. The Lord's had mercy upon me. He might have taken me suddenly that night, but he knew I wasn't ready, and he had mercy on me. And now, lad, your mother and I thought we would just kneel right down here to-night, and ask the Lord to take each of us, and make us his own. You want to, don't you, my son?"

Martin nodded, and for the first time the stage-driver's family knelt together. They whose souls had been sleeping were awake.

BY THE WAY.

Cliffs by the blue bay held many fossil shells. Children sometimes strayed here and there with hammers, pounding out fossils from fallen pieces of the cliffs. On the extent of sands that bordered the cliffs and stretched up the coast between them and the breakers, old stumps that had been months before brought in by the waves lay half buried from sight. A short distance farther up the coast, the sands went a greater way inland, forming a nook where driftwood and stumps had accumulated. On the sand in this nook stood a horse and an old wagon. Beyond a large log, a little fire of driftwood had been started, and a woman was endeavoring to fry some fish in a spider. Two children had partly unharnessed the horse, and were giving him some dry grass.

From afar, a woman and a girl who had been taking a walk on a road high up on the cliffs, looked curiously down at the persons in the sandy nook.

"I wonder who they are, and what they are traveling that way for?" said the girl to her mother.

"It's the same wagon that was on, the sands last night, I suppose," returned her mother. "The milk boy said he saw a wagon drive on the beach about dark. I wonder if they stayed up here all night? Suppose we walk down, Addie, and talk with that woman."

"I'm afraid she won't want to see us," objected the daughter. "If they had wanted to see anybody, they'd have stopped at the settlement."

Notwithstanding this objection, the mother began to descend the path toward the sands at the bottom of the cliffs. Both Mrs. Weeks and her daughter Addie were somewhat breathless by the time they had pushed their way through the heavy white sand to the spot where the stranger, was cooking. The spider contained only a few very small fish.

"Good-morning," said Mrs. Weeks, pleasantly.

The brown-faced woman who held the spider lifted her eyes and nodded.

"Have you been fishing?" asked Mrs. Weeks.

"We didn't have much luck," murmured the other woman. "Maybe we didn't fish in the best place. Tillie was wanting fish."

The younger of the two children colored and hung her head at this reference to her. The other smiled shyly.

"We have some fresh rock cod up at our house. My brother catches fresh fish for us every day," said Addie to the older little girl. "Don't you want to walk back with me, and, get some of the fish for your mother?"

The child nodded. "We're not beggars, Miss. You must not rob yourself of your own fish," remonstrated, the child's mother; but Addie assured the woman that fish were so plentiful in the settlement that neighbors often gave part of the results of a catch to some one else.

The girl went away over the cliffs with the child. Mrs. Weeks sat down on a log. When Addie and the little girl came back with the fish and some milk, Mrs. Weeks rose and went home with her daughter.

"The woman's husband is dead, and she's driving north with her children," Mrs. Weeks told Addie. "She has an idea she can get work in some cannery up the coast. I told her there were some unoccupied tents in our settlement, and I wished she and the children would come and sleep in the tents, while she's here. But she won't come. I was sorry they slept on the beach last night, but she says they are used to sleeping in the wagon, and it is warm weather, you know."

The wagon did not drive on that day, though the woman and the children kept away from the little summer settlement.

It was the custom of the people of this small settlement to go down on the beach, after dark at evening, and have a camp-fire. Some old stump would be lit, and the people would sit on logs or on the sand about the fire, and talk and sing. The last thing, every night, hymns were sung.

To-night, Addie and her, mother went down to the beach as usual. After sitting by the fire awhile, Addie rose and wandered up the beach, as persons sometimes did, to watch the waves. At a distance from the camp-fire, where the darkness, covered the beach, Addie turned to go back. She was startled by a movement in the darkness.

"Don't be afraid," said the voice of the woman who, with her children, had spent that day in the nook farther up the beach. "The little girls were asleep, and I came here to listen to the folks sing. That's the reason I haven't driven on to-day, because I hoped the folks would sing again to-night, the way they did last night. I haven't heard hymn-singing for years, before. I've lived in mining and such places. I want to ask you a question."

The woman paused.

"Do you suppose my baby's at the River?" she went on.

Addie hardly comprehended the woman's meaning.

"What river?" asked the girl.

"The River they sang about last night," explained the woman.

She motioned toward the group at the distant camp-fire, and Addie remembered that on the previous evening the people had sung:

"Shall we gather at the river?"

"I haven't heard that sung before for years and years," the woman continued. "We used to sing it when I was a little girl at home in the East, but I've mostly forgot such things. Mining camps and a drunk husband make you forget. There never was a church anywhere we lived, and Sam got drunk Sundays. And then he died. I don't suppose Sam got to the River. I don't know. I wish he did. But if my baby's got there, I want to go to the River."

The woman began to sob.

"I never told you about my baby." she faltered. "He was a dreadful nice little—"

"Good-morning!" said Mrs. Weeks pleasantly.

"—baby. I've got some of his things in a little box in the wagon. He died after his father did. I wouldn't feel acquainted with the saints that the folks sang gather at the River; but I'd feel acquainted with my baby. He's there, isn't he?"

"Yes," said Addie softly, "your baby's by the River, and you can go there, too."

The woman tried to control her sobs and listen, while Addie told in as simple language as she could the way to peace.

"It's just coming to Christ, just as we are, and asking him to make us his," finished the girl. "He's promised to forgive, if we're in earnest about asking."

Addie waited a moment.

"Maybe you'd be willing to come to the camp-fire with me," suggested Addie. "Those people

are only, some of our neighbors. They like these open-air meetings. Perhaps they'd make the way clearer to you."

"No," said the woman hastily. "No, I'm not fit for such folks, but would you mind doing one thing for me? Will you go back and just sit down, careless like, on one of the logs there by the fire, as if you'd got back from going down to see the breakers roll in, the way some of the folks do? And don't let anybody know you've seen me at all! Don't say one word about me, but when they get through singing some hymn, won't you just start them singing, 'Shall we gather at the River'? I want to hear it once again, but don't let them know they're singing it for me! Will you manage it the way I want?"

"Yes," promised Addie.

The girl went back and sat down on a log beside the fire, with the other people. The fire was beginning to burn low, and the girl was fearful lest at the end of the hymn that was being sung, some one should make a move to go back to the encampment. As soon as she could Addie began:

"Shall we gather at the river?"

The other voices took up the hymn. No one noticed that Addie's voice soon faltered and was still.

"Shall we gather at the river, Where bright angel-feet have trod: With its crystal tide forever Flowing by the throne of God?"

The words rang, out clear and sweet, and then the joyful assurance broke forth:

"Yes, we'll gather at the river, The beautiful, the beautiful river. Gather with the saints at the river That flows by the throne of God."

The words of stanza after stanza floated out into the darkness of the cliffs and upper sands with a distinctness that the loud waves did not overcome. There was no form or, motion visible in all the night that hid the shoreward side of the beach.

The next morning Addle went from the settlement, to carry the woman and her children some milk. When the girl reached the nook, she found it empty. She ran upon the bluffs, and looked northward, but there was neither horse nor wagon visible. The mother, and children had evidently resumed their journey very early, and the turns of the country roads had hidden the travelers. They had vanished forever.

"God guide them to the River!" whispered Addie.

AT COUSIN HARRIET'S

The "filaree," or pinclover; had borne its seeds with curious long ends—those seeds that California children call "clocks"—and among THE filaree there stood, on slender, bare stems, small flowers of the lily family which are known as "bluebells." A boy was walking through the filaria. He was carrying a hatchet and an ax, and he looked tired, though it was early in the day.

"I guess Cousin Harriet doesn't know how hard working on the alkali patch is," he murmured softly. "She isn't like mother:"

The boy's head dropped, and a sob escaped him.

"I wish mother hadn't died;" he said chokingly. "Most every boy has a mother."

He tried to stop crying, but it was hard, for he was overworked, and he was only twelve years old.

Six months before this, his mother had died. Several weeks alter her death, Claude's father had been called East on business; and had left the boy and his younger sisters Rose and Daisy on a ranch owned by Cousin Harriet, several miles from the children's former home. It had been very hard for the children to part from their father so soon after their mother's death, but he told them that while the business that called him East would take a number of months, yet there was some prospect that their mother's own sister, Aunt Jennie, with her husband and little boy, would come with Claude's father on his return. Then they could all live together at the dear home place. So the stay at Cousin Harriet's would not probably be perpetual.

Cousin Harriet was a widow. She looked after her ranch with great diligence. She had several hired men and women, and the ranch was a very busy place. Cousin Harriet was not much used to children, having none of her own, but she tried to do her duty by the three left in her charge.

Rose and Daisy did not find the household tasks that were assigned them very difficult. Cousin Harriet secretly did not like boys, however. She tried to treat Claude justly, but the boy sadly missed the mother-love to which he had been accustomed all his life. He was expected to help the hired men on the ranch, and they made him work rather hard, especially since they had been fixing the "alkali patch."

The alkali patch was in the southwest corner of Cousin Harriet's ranch. On several acres, nothing would grow, on account of the alkali in the soil. The alkali stood on the ground in white patches here and there, and Claude hated the sight of it. Cousin Harriet, however, was very enthusiastic about trying to reclaim this "alkali sink," so that it might bear crops.

Alkali extended over the fields of adjoining neighbors, and Cousin Harriet thought that if only her hired men could conquer her alkali patch, then the discouraged neighbors might think it possible to do something with such parts of their land, also. So, one of the first things that was done with Cousin Harriet's "alkali sink" was to make some redwood drains, shaped like the letter V, and place these about three feet below the surface. A "sump," or drainage pit, was dug, too, into which the drains might discharge the alkali water. The hired men expected Claude to help dig the "sump," and it proved quite hard work. So did the pounding of the "hard pan" on the alkali tract, itself. The tough, hard clods of earth were so difficult to pulverize that they had to be pounded with crowbars and axes.

"I used to think that helping pick lemons, at home, was work," Claude thought to-day, as he went toward the part of the ranch where he was expected to work, "but I didn't know about alkali patches, then. And—I had mother."

The tears would come into his eyes.

The hired men were scattered over the extensive alkali tract, and were pounding the clods. Claude chose to work near a man called Neil. The boy liked Neil better than the other men, because he did not speak crossly.

Claude sorrowfully pounded the alkali clods. How tiresome the work was, and how uncomfortably warm the sun! The boy worked dejectedly. After a while, pausing to take breath, he looked up and found Neil also pausing.

"We are tired," said Neil, with a friendly smile.

"Don't you hate this work?" exclaimed Claude vehemently. "I wouldn't touch it, if Cousin Harriet didn't make me."

The hired man looked kindly at the small, tired boy.

"It is not most pleasant," he returned, "but what I think of makes me glad while I work."

"What do you think of?" asked Claude, giving an alkali clod a push.

"I was thinking," answered Neil gently, "how once I had a hard heart—very hard. It was like these clods, where nothing good can grow. People who looked at me could see that my heart was hard. Men would have said, 'Neil's heart can never be different' But Jesus took away my hard heart and gave me a new one. That is what makes me glad all the time, though I work on these hard alkali clods. Some day this patch we work on will be different. There will be beautiful, green, growing crops on it. But that is not so great a change as it is to change a hard heart and get a new heart from our Savior."

Claude did not say anything. He bent over the hard clods and worked silently, but he was not thinking of his work. He was remembering his mother's voice as it had sounded nights when she had knelt beside his bed and prayed that her boy might become a Christian. There had been one night that Claude would always remember, when his mother had come for the last time to his bedside, and prayed feebly for her boy. The next week she had died.

Claude looked up at Neil, now. The man evidently found the work hard, but his face showed that he had spoken truly when he said that he was glad, even though he did work on the hard, alkali clods.

"I wish I were like Neil," thought Claude.

The wish grew. It changed into an earnest prayer, not that he might be like Neil, but a prayer for the same blessing that Neil had—a new heart. No earnest prayer for that gift is ever met by a refusal. Neil watched Claude anxiously, as they worked day by day.

"We can't change ourselves, any more than this alkali plot can change itself," said Neil, "but we can yield ourselves and our life to the blessed Jesus and love him, for he is love."

One day, Claude said softly, "I've done it, Neil. I've given myself to Jesus."

The face of the hired man glowed with added happiness through the toiling days that followed. When the alkali clods were broken and plowed, gypsum was scattered on the land and harrowed in. Then water was turned on and allowed to stand several inches deep over the alkali

plot. The water stood for several weeks. Gradually it soaked through the soil and passed out into the drainage pit. After several soakings, alternating with breaking of clods and treatment with gypsum, the former alkali patch was given some seed. How the men watched the land day after day, and how the first green sprouts of corn were hailed! The alkali patch was changed. Cousin Harriet was rejoiced.

"There's so much land saved," she said. "It's a great change."

Neil listened to the words as in a parable. He was thinking of a greater change. He was rejoicing over the boy of the household.

Months had gone by. One day there was a joyful outcry at the farm-house. The little girls rushed out to meet their father. With him was their mother's sister, Aunt Jennie, with her husband and little boy.

Claude was on the ranch at work, and did not hear the joyful outcry at first.

He was not aware of the new-comers, till his father and the two little girls rushed where Claude was working, and the boy's father caught him in a close embrace.

"Come and see Aunt Jennie," his father said to Claude.

"She-she looks like, mamma," whispered Rose tremulously, and Claude came somewhat bashfully into the house.

There he saw a woman whose face did indeed look, like his mother's, and he felt mother-arms put around him. He heard a voice like his mother's say, "Is this my boy?" He felt a warm teardrop on his cheek, and he knew that Aunt Jennie understood and cared for boys, and that he would be indeed "her boy."

That afternoon they all drove away from the ranch, leaving Cousin Harriet smitten with a sudden sense of loneliness, for she had even. grown attached to Claude as well as to his sisters. The boy looked back at the ranch. It was rapidly being left behind, but he could still see the green patch of corn that covered the place where the alkali used to be. Rut the boy was, not thinking of the alkali patch alone. A look of reverent thankfulness came into his face. "Mother will be glad I ever met Neil," he thought.

TWO small brown hands were held outstretched in the air. Cautiously they moved forward, lower and lower. Then they darted and grasped with speed what seemed to be some sand. Something in the sand objected, but the boy held on and gathered sand and all into his tin. He looked with much satisfaction at his presumably indignant prisoner, a spiny gray "horned toad" that had been peaceably sunning himself, nearly buried in sand, on the hill.

The owner of the two nimble hands, Arturo, smiled.

"Get four bit, maybe!" he anticipated.

"Get four bit for tia Marta!"

In California "four bits" means a half dollar. Occasionally somebody on the overland train that stopped at the station in town would be attracted toward a spiny "horned toad" as a curiosity, and would buy one. Arturo meant to try to sell this specimen in that way. If he got the money, he would give it to tia Marta.

Tia Mama was Arturo's aunt. "Tia" means "aunt" in Spanish. Presumably for the reason that nephews are sometimes troublesome to their aunts, there is a Spanish proverb that warns a nephew against making his aunt too frequent visits:

En casa de tia, Mas no cads dia:' ("In the house of thy aunt, But not every day.") Notwithstanding this adage, however, the boy Arturo lived with his Aunt Marta. This was not always pleasant, for neither Arturo nor tia Marta was perfect. Yet they really thought a good deal of each other. The third member of the household was Tia Marta's husband, do (uncle) Diego, but he was very old and lame, and could not work. Tia Marta earned the living, and Arturo usually thought of himself as dwelling with tia Marta rather than do Diego. Arturo never quarreled with his uncle.

When the overland train stopped at the station for water, and Arturo rushed breathlessly to sell his horned toad, the eager boy found no passenger who was desirous of being a customer save an old gentleman who doubtfully offered twenty-five cents for the creature. 'Arturo stuck bravely to his intended price of "four bits," but the train creaked for starting, and, alarmed, the boy hastily handed over the toad, took the quarter of a dollar, and rushed off the train.

The old gentleman shouted from the platform for instructions as to feeding his pet, 'axed Arturo shouted back advice in broken English to let it catch "muchos, muchos" (many) flies, and have "mucho, mucho" air. The toad was in a pasta-board box at present. Arturo was anxious that it should be well treated, for the boy felt it would not be fair to make the creature a prisoner, and then sell it to somebody who would starve it.

The old gentleman seemed satisfied with the shouted directions. But when the train had puffed away, Arturo sat down and wrathfully looked at his quarter of a dollar.

"He had altos pesos!" Arturo muttered; "ought give four bit."

According to Arturo's belief, every American had in his possession "altos pesos," which is Spanish for "high" or "enormous" "dollars," or, as Americans say, "a pile of money." Therefore Arturo felt sure that the old gentleman ought to have given half a dollar for the horned toad.

Arturo was now not at all inclined to give tia Marta the twenty-five cents. He wanted the money himself. Tia Marta was going to wash for somebody to-day, and would get her pay.

What should he buy? Twenty-five cents must not be spent lightly. It was not so often that a horned toad was found or sold.

Arturo did not muse long alone. Another boy had heard Arturo's shouted advice to the old gentleman, and had told two or three comrades. They came about Arturo to proffer advice. "Bollos," or cakes, were joyfully suggested, but Arturo refused.

An older Spanish boy, Manuel, joined the company. He was a lazy fellow, whom a good many of the younger boys admired because he could play a guitar and because he wore cheap jewelry that seemed gorgeous to inexperienced eyes.

Manuel approved of Arturo's rejection of the cake proposition. What good was cake? It would be soon eaten and gone!

Manuel, who was ever bent on securing any money that he could obtain without work, proposed to Arturo that he should buy a certain watch-chain owned by himself. Manuel, who knew that the showy thing was worthless, tried to picture how a fine-looking boy like Arturo would appear with so gorgeous an ornament. The younger boys listened enviously, and Arturo's Spanish love of display began to glow. Yet he was cautious enough to put off Manuel till the next day. Arturo went away, leaving the younger boys gazing enviously after him. His pride was flattered.

As Arturo came into the little yard that was about his humble home, he heard tia Marta singing. Arturo always dreaded to hear her sing, because then he was sure that some calamity had occurred. Tia Marta fully believed in the Spanish saying, "He who sings frightens away his ills."

It was as Arturo thought. Tia Marta had failed to get the day's washing she had expected to have. This seemed very unfortunate, for there was but little in the house to eat. Beans, one of the main staples of food among the Mexicans, were almost gone from the household supplies, and there was no money to buy more. Tia Marta had cooked the last of the beans for supper. The uncle and aunt gave fully half the beans to Arturo, and, being hungry, he ate them. Tia Marta ate little, and urged the rest of the beans on tio Diego.

After supper, the aunt repeated with devout cheerfulness those Spanish sayings, "God sends the sore, and knows the medicine," and "God sends the cold according to our rags." She believed that God would help.

Arturo thought of the twenty-five cents in his pocket. He looked at old tio Diego. Arturo wondered if his uncle were really hungry. Beans! Twenty-five cents would buy beans enough for a number of days. But it would be such a downfall to buy only beans with that twenty-five cents! Tia Marta would probably find some washing soon, and would buy beans herself. Arturo had had enough supper to-night.

Next day Arturo bought the watch-chain. The little boys at school were overawed by his showy ornament, but the teacher thought laughingly, "How these Spanish do like to dress up!"

At night, when Arturo went home with his watch-chain hidden in his pocket, tia Marta was singing again. There was only a little bread and some dried figs for supper, and Arturo's healthy boyish appetite already began to make him sorry for his bargain.

The next day tia Marta sang, and there were only dried figs to eat all day. The next day there were figs for breakfast and figs at noon. Even dried figs were almost gone.

At night, however, tia Marta said joyfully, "I got wash to-morrow!"

Arturo felt relieved.

The next morning there were only two or three figs apiece. When Arturo came home at noon, he found frightened tio Diego crying feebly and leaning over tia Marta, who had sunk in the doorway. Scantily fed tia Marta's strength had given out in the midst of the washing. She said she was only dizzy, but Arturo was frightened by her looks. Suddenly it came to him that he loved her.

Arturo ran out of the house. He ran to a little grocery, and begged the grocer to take the watch-chain for some beans. The grocer only laughed, telling the boy the chain was worthless. But Arturo was desperate. He knew better than to go to Manuel. Manuel would have spent the

twenty-five cents long ago, and Arturo pleaded with the grocer. The grocer's wife was in and out, looking after her romping children. She held the worthless, gaudy chain before her black-eyed baby, who clutched it and laughed. The mother laughed, too. Her husband laughed. The baby kept the chain, and crowed.

The grocer's wife filled a big paper bag with beans, and gave it, with a loaf of bread, to Arturo. The boy clasped the packages, and ran.

At home he found tia Marta sitting still with shut eyes.

"Eat!" cried Arturo, thrusting the loaf into her hands.

Tio Diego laughed with joy and put the beans to cooking. Arturo stayed home from school that afternoon, and helped wash. To-morrow the pay would come. Tio Diego tried lamely to help Arturo wash.

Tia Marta was feeling better, and had just declared her intention of washing, when Arturo suddenly forsook the tub and dropped beside her.

"Me malo, malo!" (bad) he sobbed.

He cried bitterly, and told tia Marta about the watch-chain.

Old tia Marta looked pityingly at her shamefaced nephew.

"Poor child!" she said, "thou art young."

But when next day the school teacher asked Arturo the reason of his absence from school the previous afternoon, and he had confessed the whole story, the teacher said, "Arturo, it is more beautiful to have a heart of love toward others than it is to wear a watch-chain even of real gold. Will you remember that?"

Arturo promised, and the teacher said to herself:

"I will see that tia Marta does not come to such straits again."

COMALE'S REVENGE

The Waves splashed on the bold rocks that guard the little harbor of Colombo on the southwest shore of the island of Ceylon. Groves of palm trees looked down on the one-story houses of the town. Upon a rock outside of Colombo stood a barefoot boy, his dark eyes gazing toward the tropically green mountains of the island. His attention was particularly riveted on one of the highest peaks, that one which is known to English-speaking people as "Adam's Peak," and which is reverenced by natives as being the traditional spot from which Buddha ascended to heaven.

"The butterflies are making their pilgrimage to the holy footprint," murmured the boy, Comale, to himself.

He could see from his standpoint great streams of butterflies, taking their flight apparently from all parts of the island, and going toward the famous Peak. These flights of butterflies, occurring occasionally in Ceylon, have won for the butterflies themselves the name of "Samanaliya," since it is thought that the heathen god, Saman, left his footprint on the mountain, and the butterflies, like devout beings, take pains to go on pilgrimage to the holy footprint.

Comale himself knew better than to believe in this old heathen tale, yet he never saw the myriads of flying butterflies without remembering what he had been taught in his earlier years, before Christianity came under the high-pitched roof where Comale's father and mother lived.

Long time did Comale stand on the rock and gaze at the vast numbers of flying, winged "pilgrims." The butterflies seemed countless, and at last Comale, sighing a little, said, "They are very good," and, jumping from his rock, made haste toward the cinnamon gardens where he worked.

Comale was a "peeler." In the perfectly white soil around the city of Colombo, the cinnamon tree flourishes as well as, if not better than, in any other place in the world. It requires much practice to become a skillful peeler of cinnamon, but Comale, having been taught by his father, and being moreover a careful, observing lad, was fast attaining a degree of success in his trade. Formerly the Cingalese had allowed the cinnamon trees to grow to their natural height, about twenty or thirty feet, and naturally the cinnamon bark from such trees had been tough. This was long ago, however, before even the Dutch owned Colombo. Better wisdom came with them, and

in these later days of English rule, sensible ideas still prevailed. The cinnamon trees were kept pruned, and the comparatively young shoots were found to produce better cinnamon than old trees had done.

Comale, arriving at the gardens, began to work. The branches he chose for cutting were about three feet long and were the growth of from three to five years.

Comale made longitudinal cuts in the bark, two cuts in a small shoot, more cuts in a large shoot, and then with his instrument carefully removed the bark strips.

He placed the pieces of bark in bundles, in which shape the cinnamon was to stay for a while, that it might ferment, so that the outer skin and the under green portion might be more easily scraped away by Comale with a curved knife. After that, the inner cinnamon bark would dry and draw up, till the pieces looked like quills. But ever, as Comale worked this day, something inly disturbed his thoughts. He was very unhappy.

"Comale," warned his father sharply, "that was a bad cut! Be more careful!"

Comale's father was attending to some bark that had dried to quills. He was putting small cinnamon quills into larger ones, till he made a collection about forty inches long. Then he would bind the cinnamon into bundles by pieces of split bamboo. But Comale's father kept an eye on his son's work, also.

Comale was much abashed at his father's reproof. For a time the lad kept his mind upon the cinnamon. Then his thoughts went back to their old uncomfortable vein, for he found in a tree a little bundle of sticks from four to six inches long, all the sticks placed lengthwise, the whole looking like a small bunch of firewood. Comale knew what this bundle was, well enough, for many a time he had found this kind of a nest of the larva of a moth. He knew it was lined with fine spun silk, and that the heathen people said that the moth used once to be a real person who stole wood, and who, having died, came back to earth again in the form of a moth, condemned, for the former theft, to make little bunches of firewood. Comale sighed as he touched the little bundle hanging from the tree.

He thought of the "good" butterflies that he had that morning seen going on "pilgrimage."

"Some people are good, and some people are bad," thought Comale sadly. "The butterflies go on pilgrimage, but the bad moth's little bundle of firewood hangs in the tree. I wish I did not always do something bad!"

Ordinarily he would not have cared for the acts of either moth or butterfly, but to-day there was in Comale's heart a sense of guilt that found accusation from unwonted sources.

"Comale!" warned his father again, "another false cut!"

Tears of mortification sprang to the lad's eyes. Never had ha seemed to himself to be so awkward a peeler. It was something beside awkwardness that ailed Comale's hand to-day. He was worrying over the possible consequences of a deed of his.

That morning, he and his sister Pidura, who was about his own age, had quarreled. They did not quarrel as often now as they used to before Pidura and he knew anything about the way to be a Christian. They tried to be patient, usually, but this morning there had been a sharp quarrel between the two about the rice for breakfast. After breakfast, Comale, still feeling very angry, had gone into the veranda that each one-story house possesses. This veranda was overshadowed by the high-pitched roof, and while, inside the house, there was matting on the floor, as in Cingalese houses, the veranda had a rough material made from the husks of the cocoanut. This material was so placed as to prevent serpents from crawling into the house. Ceylon has many serpents, and Pidura, Comale's sister, was very much afraid of them. As Comale, yet very angry with his sister, stood in the veranda, it occurred to him that if he pulled away some of the rough cocoanut material, he might leave a place where a serpent could come into the house and scare Pidura. It would be good enough for her, he thought; and not pausing to reason about the consequences of his action, he pulled away the rough material till he left quite a space undefended. He did not believe that Padura would notice it.

He could see her, busy in the kitchen, which is a house separate from a Cingalese dwelling. Her plump, pleasant face bent over the fire, and then again she turned away, her light jacket and striped skirt vanishing toward another corner of the kitchen. Comale half laughed as he thought how scared she would be if a little serpent should find the opening he had made. Then he ran away.

But now, since beginning his day's work, his quarrel and the possible consequences of his misdeed had begun to weigh heavily on Comale's conscience, and had lent an accusing tongue to nature. So true is it that a guilty conscience finds censure where a heart that is at peace with God and man would find no reproving reminder.

Comale could not go home till nightfall, and all day his worry increased. Why had he done so wicked a thing? The quarrel over the trouble about the rice looked so little, now! If a poisonous snake should find that opening, and should creep in, and strike his mother, or Pidura, or the little

brother, or, the baby! It was dreadful to think of! Why had he blindly followed his anger? Had he not often heard that he who would be a Christian must forgive others? Instead of forgiving Pidura, he had done something that perhaps might kill her.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." It was what the missionary had said.

"I ought to have forgiven Pidura!" Comale's heart cried. "Oh, I am bad, bad! How can I bear it, to wait till I can go home to see if all is safe?"

Naturally, Comale's work was not done well, to-day. But he cared little for criticism of his peeling, when at evening the time came to go home. He ran all the way. He plunged headlong into the street where he lived. He ran past the tile-roofed houses. There was his home's veranda with bunches of bananas hanging in the shade, and a basket of cocoa-nuts below. Comale hastened in, out of breath, yet trying to act as if nothing ailed him. Pidura was safe! He saw her. He found his mother and the baby in another room. Comale drew a long breath, and tried to stop trembling. His little brothers were in the street.

It was growing dusk, and another fear beset him. If a serpent had crawled into the house, the creature might have hidden itself, and might not come out till sometime in the night. Comale guiltily slipped into the veranda again. The unprotected portion had not been discovered. It lay exposed as he had left it.

As well as he could, Comale replaced the cocoanut-husk material, so that it might be a defense as before. Then he went softly around within the house, hunting for any possible hiding-place where the enemy he dreaded might be concealed.

"Comale," said his mother, "what are you doing?" And Comale did not dare to hunt any more.

He was dreadfully miserable as he lay that night in the darkness. He could not sleep. He listened for any outcry. To think that he might have let an enemy into his own home! Comale rose upon his elbow to listen. The walls of Cingalese houses are not carried up to the roof, and, because of this, an outcry or conversation in one room can be heard all over the house. Comale listened. Sometimes he fancied he heard the sound of something slipping over the matting on the floor. So worried was he that when he slept it was only by short naps from which he woke with a start, and resumed his listening.

Toward morning, when light began to come, Comale crept from his place. He looked toward where his little brothers slept. Hanging above one of the little boys was a slender dark line. It was alive! It swayed to and fro in the shadows, and seemed to slip a little lower toward the sleeping child. Comale started. He sprang forward with a cry, and caught the swaying thing. But it was no living creature that Comale brought with him to the floor. It was only a long, thin strip of bamboo with which Comale's father had intended to bind cinnamon bark! The strip had been hung up out of the way, and had swung a little in the current of air between the top of the wall and the roof. As the bamboo strip swayed, it had gradually slipped lower and lower toward the sleeping little boy below.

Comale's outcry had aroused the household; and without reserve the penitent lad told to the family the story of his misdeed. His dark-faced father smiled slightly and showed his teeth through his beard. He understood now the mistakes Comale had made in the cinnamon work the previous day.

"A wrong heart makes corundoo peeling go ill, Comale," he said gravely.

"Corundoo" is the native word for cinnamon.

"A wrong heart makes rice-cooking go ill, too," softly confessed Pidura. "I am sorry for yesterday's rice! It was I who made Comale's heart angry."

The father looked from one child to the other.

"Little children, love one another," he said.

AT THE PANADERIA.

The door of the "panaderia" opened. Americans would have called the place a bakery, but the sign said "Panaderia," which might be interpreted "breadery" or bake-house. All California does not read English, and it behooves shop-keepers sometimes to word their signs for the customers desired. In like manner the "Restaurante Mexicana," across the street, on a sign advertised "comidas," or meals, at twenty-five and fifty cents.

Through the panaderia doorway came a girl and a boy. They walked along by the "zanja," or irrigation ditch, that here bordered the road. The fern-leaved pepper trees beside the zanja were dotted with clusters of small, bright red berries.

"Rosa," said the boy, when the two had walked a little way, "I saw in that big yard many purple and green grapes, spread out drying for raisins."

Rosa did not answer. She trudged on, carrying her basket of bread. The brother carried a loaf in brown paper. He and she lived at the panaderia, and had set forth to carry the bread to the two regular customers.

"Rosa," stated the boy again, after a pause, "all the little oranges on the trees over there are green."

Rosa did not even look toward the oranges.

"Rosa," affirmed the boy emphatically, when a few minutes had gone by, "the Chinese doctor is measuring a window in his house! See! He has some little teacups and a teapot in his front room! I saw them just now."

Rosa looked absently toward the old building, inside a window of which was visible the head of the Chinese doctor, who wore black goggles, and who was indeed measuring his window for some reason. Rosa had small hope of the Chinese doctor as a future customer. She had seen him eating his rice with chop-sticks, and he never came to buy a scrap of bread or anything else. Rosa sighed to think what would become of the panaderia, if all the world had the same opinion as the Chinese doctor, in regard to eating. In these days Rosa was in danger of looking upon the world from a strictly calculating standpoint, and of regarding only those people as worthy of her interest who either were or might become customers of the panaderia. Still indeed customers were needed, for the receipts had been slight, lately, and Rosa's grandmother's parrot, Papagayo, a bird of such understanding that he had learned to screech, "Pan por dinero," (bread for money) had recently seen more of the former than of the latter in the shop.

Rosa and her brother still kept by the zanja, even when it turned away from the road. They went on till they reached the orange orchard of the Zanjero of the town. The Zanjero is the man who has the oversight of the irrigation system, and he has deputies under him. Rosa and her brother Joseph thought the Zanjero a great man, and stood much in awe of the irrigation laws concerning stealing water, or raising a gate to waste water, or giving water to persons outside the district.

The two bread-carriers went through the orange orchard, which was not being irrigated at this hour, for the Zanjero was particular himself to keep the hour that he paid for, as other men should be. Up to the Zanjero's house Rosa now carried the bread, and his wife herself paid for it. Rosa tied the coins carefully in one corner of the black shawl that she wore over her head.

"Rosa," anticipated Joseph aloud, as they went away through the orange orchard again, "when I am grown up, I shall be a Zanjero, and we will not have to keep the panaderia!"

But Rosa looked unbelieving. "It is not granted every man to be the Zanjero," returned she gravely, "and I love the panaderia."

It was true. She did love it, even to the castor-oil plants that grew like weeds in neglected places in the yard, and down to the south wall that was hung with a thick veil of red peppers that her grandmother was drying in the sun. It was only because the panaderia had not enough customers that Rosa looked so grave to-day. Besides, the grandmother's birthday was near, and where was money for a present?

At the other house where the children regularly delivered bread, irrigation had been going on all the morning. The half-day of irrigation, for which the owner of this orange orchard had paid, was just over, and the water-gate connecting the man's ditch with the main zanja was being shut when Rosa and Joseph arrived. The little water-gate was like a wooden shovel. It slid down some grooves, and the running water stopped. It squirmed in the zanja an instant. Then the little wooden gate was fastened with a padlock, as every gate must be when the payer for water had received from the Zanjero's deputy the amount of water paid for, whether by the fifty-cent-hour, or the two-dollar-day, or the dollar-and-a-quarter night rate, and whoever unauthorized should unfasten the padlock and open the gate would be a thief of water.

After witnessing the shutting off of the water, Joseph carried his paper-enfolded loaf to the house of this second regular customer, and then the children turned homeward toward the panaderia.

"Pan por dinero!" cried the parrot, Papagayo, when Rosa and Joseph reentered the panaderia; but alas! no customers were there. Only the grandmother sat sewing behind the counter, her blurred old eyes close to the cloth she held.

"I will take care of the panaderia now, grandmother," Rosa offered; and the grandmother answered, "I will rest a little, then."

The poor, dear grandmother! She was so tired and thin, nowadays, and her hands trembled so much! It was hard for her to try to sew. If the panaderia paid better, if there were more regular customers to whom Rosa and Joseph could carry eatables, then the grandmother would not attempt sewing at all, for it strained her eyes very much. But now she did not know what else to do. There must be a living for herself and the children someway.

Rosa found the afternoon long, sitting behind the counter, waiting for customers and trying to sew. A little boy came in and bought a loaf. Two girls bought another. Then the panaderia door ceased to swing, and the quiet afternoon went on. Across the street, women stood here and there and gossiped.

Nobody came. It grew four, then five, then six o'clock. Finally the panaderia door opened, and a woman entered. Rosa sprang up. Here was a customer, at last!

But the woman only came to the counter, and stood still. She was young, very thin and ill, evidently, and her eyes had tears in their depths. Under the black shawl that was over the newcomer's head Rosa spied a dark mark, as of a bruise, on the forehead. The young woman tried to speak.

"I have three little children," she said. "I am sick. I cannot work, and their father drinks mescal—always mescal. I have no money. Will you give me a little bread? I am no beggar, but my babies are so hungry!"

Rosa knew how much harm mescal (a kind of intoxicating drink made from the maguey or Mexican aloe) did among the neighbors. She did not doubt the woman's tale; only it was disappointing, when one thought a real customer had at last come to the panaderia, to find that it was not so. But the girl nodded sympathetically at the conclusion of the young woman's appeal.

"I will speak to grandmother," she promised.

She found her grandmother lying down still, but half awake, and explained to her the situation.

"Yes, yes," returned the grandmother, her wrinkled face full of sympathy. "Give her the bread. Has not the Lord told us to care for the poor? He would not be pleased if we sent her away without bread. Tell the poor woman to come again. The little children, must be fed."

Rosa hurried back to the counter, and gave the woman two fresh loaves and the grandmother's message.

"Gracias!" (thanks) sobbed the young woman and hurried away.

"I hope she will not tell that we gave her bread," murmured Rosa to herself as the usual quiet settled over the panaderia. "We can't afford to give bread to many people."

The weeks went by, and the panaderia did not prosper very well. It grew to be a customary thing for the thin, sick woman to come daily for bread, and she was never refused. She said with a sensitive eagerness that when she was well again she would work and pay all back, and Rosa's grandmother answered "Yes," cheerily, to this promise, though any one who looked at the poor young mother's face could see that there was small prospect of her ever being well again in this world. Her husband still drank.

Times grew harder and harder at the panaderia. In the midst of the winter a heavy blow fell, for the Zanjero's wife took a fancy to making her own bread, and as she was the regular customer who bought more loaves and paid more promptly than the other, the panaderia felt the loss keenly. Customers were very scarce, and the grandmother's eyes became so weak that she could no longer sew. Rosa sewed the little that she could, but some days there was scarcely enough to eat at the panaderia, except the very few loaves in the case—the loaves that the three hardly knew whether to dare eat or not, for fear some one should come in and want to buy. There were many other people who were poor and without work, and the little family kept their troubles to themselves. The poor sick neighbor always came every day and was given bread. Winter passed and spring arrived without much change in the panaderia's prospects.

"We could have eaten that ourselves," thought Rosa one night when the neighbor went out with the bread.

The grandmother had said that the poor were God's care, and he would bless those who for his sake fed them.

"But we keep on being poorer and poorer," thought Rosa with a sigh.

Then she reproached herself. Had not her grandmother said that the Lord cared about the panaderia? One day when spring was turning into summer, the poor neighbor came in earlier than usual. Her face was very white. Rosa and her grandmother were both by the counter. The grandmother smiled and was about to draw out the bread and give it to the woman. But the poor neighbor dropped her head on the counter, and stretched out her hand toward the old grandmother. The grandmother took the hand, and lo! in her own lay a little key.

"Take it to the Zanjero!" sobbed the sick neighbor, "and tell him to forgive! It was the mescal made my husband do it!"

Little by little Rosa and her grandmother pieced together the story of the small key. Some unscrupulous persons wished to obtain water for irrigation without paying for it. A key was made that fitted the padlocks of the little wooden gates leading from the zanja. By night some one must open these gates and close them again before morning. It was thieving, of course, and the Zanjero or his deputies might catch the person who did it. But the sick neighbor's husband, wanting money to buy more mescal, had been induced to undertake the task of stealthily opening the gates. His wife, suspicious of his errand, had followed him on the first night of his attempt. She had seen him stop by a Mexican cactus, and raise something, she knew not what, in the zanja. After he had gone, she went to the spot and putting her hand into the water felt the current that ran through a gate he had opened.

"Then I know!" tearfully declared the woman to Rosa's grandmother. "I follow my husband. I tell him the Zanjero is the friend of the good panaderia that gives the bread! I tell him he shall not open the other gates! I snatch the key! I tell him `No! No! The panaderia is my friend! The Zanjero is the panaderia's friend!' He shall not cheat the Zanjero! My husband say if he open other gates he get money for mescal. I say 'No!' I run away with key. My husband say, 'Don't tell anybody! I will not open the gates again! Let other men do it.' But I say, 'I must tell, because the Zanjero is the best friend of the panaderia. No one shall cheat the best friend of the panaderia, that feeds our babies so long—all winter and now."

Evidently the woman supposed that the Zanjero was still the principal regular customer of the panaderia. Rosa and her grandmother had never told about his ceasing to buy bread, and the neighbor thought that he was still considered their very chief customer.

That evening Rosa and Joseph took the long-unused path to the Zanjero's house. His wife came to the door.

"Oh," she said, "it's the two little bread-bringers! No, I don't want any bread. Are you trying to get orders?"

"May I see the Zanjero?" asked Rosa gravely.

The Zanjero's wife, whose name in plain English was Mrs. Craig, led the two children into her husband's presence. Rosa, very pale with the thought of being in the presence of so great a man, told her story in trembling tones, and held out the key.

The Zanjero took it, and looked at it curiously.

"Will you forgive?" asked Rosa timorously. "The poor, sick woman asks you to forgive. She says it was the mescal that made her husband do it."

"I presume so," returned the man grimly. "They're all thieves."

But the Zanjero's wife was wiser than her husband. She dropped into a chair and put an arm around Rosa.

"You have not told all the story yet, or else I do not understand," she said gently. "What makes this woman so much your friend that she comes and tells your grandmother about the key?"

So the whole story came out at last—about the long, sad winter at the panaderia; the grandmother's attempts at sewing; her failing eyes; the lack of customers, yet the daily giving of bread to the poor neighbor and her three children; the trust that the Lord knew about the panaderia and its occupants.

The Zanjero's wife understood it all now. She looked up at her husband. There were tears in her eyes as she said:

"While you are forgiving that man, you'd better think how much forgiveness I need for having stopped taking bread of the panaderia in the heart of winter, when they needed the money so badly! To think of their struggling along, and yet giving bread every day to a woman and three babies! If the panaderia folks had not done this, you'd never have found out about this plan to rob the zanja! That woman would simply have kept the story and the key to herself, and those dishonest men would have found somebody else to open the gates at night for them. It was only because she thought that you were a noted customer of the panaderia that she sent you word of this plan to steal the water."

The great Zanjero turned and looked at Rosa.

"Tell that sick woman," he said gravely, "that I forgive her husband for opening the gate, though I don't know how much water he helped steal that night. Tell her, though, that he must never do such a thing again. I am coming to see him myself, and I shall tell him he is forgiven. But he must stop drinking mescal."

"And tell your grandmother," broke in the Zanjero's wife, "that I want three loaves of bread to-morrow morning, and I want bread every day. Here's the money for the three loaves. And I'm going to get you a lot of regular customers! I have friends enough. They'll take bread of you, if I ask them. You poor children! Why didn't you come and tell me about things, long ago?"

So it was that the mercy which the old grandmother showed to the sick neighbor and her children returned in blessing on the panaderia. For the Zanjero's wife rested not till she had fulfilled her promise. Customers became many and well-paying, and the old grandmother, happy in the prosperity, said to Rosa and to Joseph:

"See you, my children? Did I not tell you that the Lord knew about the panaderia? It is he who sends all this good to us who deserve it not."

MISS STRATTON'S PAPER

The wind was blowing quite keenly from the north, and Miss Stratton had the collar of her coat turned up, as she hurried through the darkness of the avenue. She was talking behind her coat collar, the tips of which brushed her lips. If what Miss Stratton said had been audible to any one beside herself, it would have sounded as if she were talking severely to somebody.

"I don't see why you can't throw that evening paper where we can find it!" Miss Stratton was saying under her breath. "We have a broad walk, and there's plenty of room! I've been out in the yard three or four times to-night, and hunted thoroughly, and mother's been out once. Mother's eyes are poor, and she likes to have the paper before dark."

Miss Stratton caught her breath in the cold wind. She hastened by a gas-lamp, climbed the hill, and found her way in darkness up the long steps of a house. She fumbled for the bell and rang it. There was a little stir within, the opening of an interior door to let light into the hall, and then a boy's step. The front door opened. Miss Stratton looked straight into the boyish face that appeared.

"I want to know where you threw our paper to-night," she demanded. "I can't find it anywhere."

The boy stepped one side so that the light within the farther room might fall on Miss Stratton's face. He recognized her.

"Oh," returned the boy, "your paper went up a tree."

"Up a tree!" exclaimed Miss Stratton, indignantly. "Why didn't you come in and tell me, so I'd know where to look for it?"

"If I'd had an extra copy with me, I'd have thrown in another," said the boy—"I'll get you one."

He walked back into the sitting-room, glad to escape from the accusing subscriber, whom he had not expected to see following him to his home. Miss Stratton sternly waited. The boy's sister had come into the hall, and was holding a candle for a light. Her brother came back with the evening paper, and Miss Stratton took it.

"I wish you'd be careful where you throw that paper, Harry," she admonished him, her indignation cooling. "I've spoken to you about that before. I don't like to have to come away up here for the paper. It isn't convenient."

"Yes'm," answered the boy.

Miss Stratton hurried home. When she arrived there, one of the first things she saw gleaming faintly through the garden's darkness, was the missing evening paper that Harry had thrown into a pepper tree near the side fence. During Miss Stratton's absence, the strong wind had shaken the paper down, and it lay at the foot of the tree. "How did he suppose I was going to find that paper up that tree?" questioned Miss Stratton. "I did look up there before dark, but I didn't see anything."

The evening paper was easily discoverable for a week or so after this: Then matters went back to their old state and Miss Stratton frequently spent a quarter of an hour finding her evening paper.

"If he'd take the slightest pains he could throw it on this walk that is ten feet wide!" she would tell herself indignantly, as she pushed aside the branches of blue marguerites and the leaves of calla-lilies, and peered into holes on either side of the steps near the front gate, where the watering of the garden had washed away the soil.

Miss Stratton had liked Harry very much, when he first became paper boy. He had a frank manner that made him friends. At first he carefully threw the paper on Miss Stratton's front piazza. He never skipped an evening, as the former paper boy had sometimes done, and Miss Stratton rejoiced that at last a paper boy who was reliable had been found for the route. Months had passed, and while Harry was as careful at some houses as before, Miss Stratton's was not among that number. Harry had three 'customers on that street and he nightly walked only as far toward Miss Stratton's as would enable him to throw her paper and then, with two or three steps, throw another paper to the neighbor diagonally across the street. A few more steps would have made Harry sure that Miss Stratton's paper fell every night squarely on the broad front path, but he "fired the paper at her," as he expressed it, and the result was Miss Stratton's otherwise unnecessary number of steps hunting after her paper. Yet Harry would have scorned to cheat any customer. He fulfilled the letter of the law. He delivered the paper.

Late one afternoon the minister and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Landler, came by invitation to take supper with Mrs. and Miss Stratton. After a while, as they sat, pleasantly chatting, Mr. Landler spoke of a ship that had been overdue for almost two weeks. A neighbor's son was on board, and this fact caused Mr. and Mrs. Landler to look at the papers, morning and night, as soon as possible, to ascertain if anything had been heard of the missing vessel.

"That's what my daughter and I have been doing, too," returned Mrs. Stratton. "I wonder if this evening's paper hasn't come, so we could look?"

Her daughter glanced at the clock.

"Why, yes!" said she. "That paper ought to have come before now."

Miss Stratton went out and hunted carefully. No paper was visible, search as she might.

"Perhaps it hasn't come yet," she said to the guests, when she came in.

A little later she went out again. Mrs. Landler came to help search, though Miss Stratton disclaimed the need of aid.

"The paper doesn't always fall where I can see it," explained Miss Stratton, mortified at her failure to find the paper for her guests.

"Who brings it around?" asked Mrs. Landler, looking at the broad front walk.

"Harry Butterworth," answered Miss Stratton.

She did not tell of the annoyance Harry had caused her heretofore. Harry's mother was a church friend of the Landlers and the Strattons, and Miss Stratton was loath to expose the boy's shortcomings.

No paper appeared, and after a thorough search, Mrs. Landler and Miss Stratton went into the house. Dusk was coming. Miss Stratton had occasion to go upstairs for something, and glancing out of the front hall window, she saw the twisted roll of that evening's paper lying on a projection of the roof.

"He threw the paper on the roof!" exclaimed Miss Stratton, "and he didn't come in to tell me!"

She pushed up the hall window, and reaching out as far as she dared, she tried with an old umbrella handle to dislodge the paper. She drew breathlessly back.

"It's no use! I can't get it!" she gasped.

She went downstairs and told her mother quietly, but Mrs. Stratton had no scruples about informing her guests what had happened.

"That boy's thrown this evening's paper on the roof!" stated old Mrs. Stratton. "He does put us to so much trouble!"

The minister instantly offered to climb the roof. Miss Stratton and her mother protested, but Mr. Landler took off his coat, climbed out of an upper-story window, and secured the paper. In one column was a notice that the missing ship had been heard from and was safe. Great was the rejoicing around the Strattons' supper-table that their friend's son was not lost.

The next time Mr. Landler saw Harry, the minister said pleasantly, "You gave me quite a climb the other night, my boy."

Harry looked astonished.

"Gave you a climb?" he questioned. "I gave you one?"

"Yes," nodded Mr. Landler. "Miss Stratton's evening paper fell on her roof. My wife and I were taking supper there, so I climbed the roof for the paper."

Harry turned very red. Was ever a paper boy so unfortunate? He knew the paper fell on the roof, but who would have supposed Mr. Landler was at the Strattons'? Harry wanted very much to be thought well of by the minister and his wife. Everybody liked them.

"I didn't know you were there," apologized Harry, hardly knowing what to say.

"No," said the minister, gently, "we never know who may be in any home. You didn't know you were delivering the paper to me. You thought it was to Miss Stratton. Wasn't that it?"

"Yes," acknowledged the boy.

"If the Lord Jesus were here on earth, Harry," went on the minister in a very grave, tender tone, "and if he wanted a little service from you, you wouldn't render it in the way you deliver Miss Stratton's paper, would you? Yet she is his child, one of his representatives on earth, and as you treat her you treat him. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these,' you know, Harry."

The next night Miss Stratton's paper fell with an emphatic thwack in the middle of the front walk. The next night it did the same, and the next, and the next.

"What has changed that boy?" wondered Miss Stratton with grateful relief, as weeks passed and the paper still fell in plain sight.

She did not know that as Harry carefully aimed his papers, the boy thought, "'Ye have done it unto me.'"

AN HONEST DAY'S WORK.

Willis walked down one of the city wharves. He was going to see his father, Mr. Sutherland, who was one of the men employed by the State Harbor Commissioners in repairing wharves. The piles that supported the wharves often needed renewing, being eaten by teredos. Sometimes the flooring of the wharves sagged and needed restoring to the former level.

Willis liked to see the pile-driver with its big hammer. He marveled at the air-pumps with which sagging wharves were raised. Perhaps three air-pumps at a time would be stationed over as many "caps," as the twelve-inch timbers under the wharf's flooring were called. The pumps, being worked, would raise the caps and hold them until blocks could be shoved underneath. Then the pumps were worked some more, and other blocks put under, till the wharf was restored to the required level. Great screws such as are used in raising buildings were also employed under wharves sometimes. There were rocks under some wharves, and water was under others. Whichever it was, Willis' father often had to go under the wharves and climb around among the caps and stringers and piles, repairing.

Seven or eight other men were employed like Mr. Sutherland. It was mid-forenoon, but Willis saw that three or four of the men were not working. They were idling around the engine of the pile-driver, and were eating something that Willis found to be cooked crabs.

"Where's father?" asked Willis. "Under the wharf, working," answered one man. "He thinks the State's looking after him every minute."

Willis saw some planks had been taken up in a distant part of the wharf's flooring. He went there and swung himself down under the wharf. There were rocks there, and Willis, following the sound of a hammer, came to his father.

"That you, Willis?" asked his father pleasantly.

"Pa," said the boy, "some of the other men are up there eating crabs. Why don't you go up and get some, too?"

"It isn't lunch-time," returned Mr. Sutherland. "We're expected to work now."

"Three or four of the men aren't working," said Willis.

"No," rejoined his father. "Several of the men lately have taken to catching crabs sometimes during work-hours."

"The men tie a rope to a big twine net, and bait it, and let it out into the bay. In a little while they haul it in again, and there are maybe half a dozen big crabs in the net. The men have made a sort of boiler out of an empty kerosene can with one end cut off. They attach a hose to the boiler of the engine and fill that can with hot water. The crabs cook in a short time and those men stop work to eat. It would be all right if the men cooked the crabs at noon, when we're allowed to lay

off, but they stop in the fore-noon sometimes an hour, and again in the afternoon sometimes, and eat crabs. The foreman we have now allows it. He does it himself."

While Mr. Sutherland talked he was working. Several of the other men were working up on top of the wharf, as Willis could tell by the sounds, but the boy's thoughts were with those three or four other men who were idling. Were not those men employed to work as steadily as his father?

"It isn't fair for them to stop and you to have to keep on," objected Willis. "I should think those, men would be discharged."

"They may and they mayn't," said his father. "They are appointed by different Harbor Commissioners, and as long as the Commissioners don't know, I suppose the men will keep their places."

"One man told me you thought the State was looking at you every minute," said Willis.

"My boy," answered Mr. Sutherland, fitting a block into place, "it's true that I'm employed to work for the State, and I feel just as much that I must do honest work for the State as if I were working for some individual. But it isn't thought of the State that makes me faithful. A Christian ought to give an honest day's work. Some people don't seem to think cheating the State is as bad as cheating another person. But it is."

Willis climbed upon the wharf again. He saw when the men who had been eating crabs came back to work. He noticed they did not work very heartily.

"My father doesn't work that way," thought the boy.

"An honest day's work." The words followed Willis as he went away from the wharf. The next week Willis was going to begin work for a large dry-goods store.

"I'll do honest day's work, too," resolved Willis.

He did not put it into words, but he thought that the One who saw whether a man under the wharves did an honest day's work would see whether a boy working for a store did the same. Willis was trying to be a Christian.

Busy days Willis had after that. The large dry-goods store had many customers who often did not wish to carry bundles home. The store had two pretty, white-covered, small carts for the delivering of packages. Willis drove one cart and a boy named August drove the other.

One afternoon Willis, out delivering dry-goods, drove by the house where August lived, and saw the store's other cart standing there.

"August is home," thought Willis. Just then, August came out.

"Don't tell," called August, laughing.

Willis, hardly comprehending, drove on about his business.

That evening at store-closing time, both boys were back with their receipt books, signed by customers who had received their packages. The boys went out of the store together.

"Saw me coming out of our house today, didn't you?" said August to Willis.

"Don't you ever stop off half an hour or so, when you're on your rounds?"

"Why, no!" answered Willis. "What would they say at the store, if they knew?"

"They can't know," asserted August. "I often stop, that way. Yesterday I went to see my aunt. How can the store tell? They don't know just how long it will take to deliver all the parcels. Some folks live farther off than others. Who's going to know?"

Willis hesitated. He remembered that the thought of the men at the wharves had been: "Who would know?" Willis had never heard that anybody had lost his place at the wharves on account of dawdling. What if August never was found out? Was it right to steal an hour, or half an hour, of his employer's time?

"No," thought Willis. "I'm going to be honest."

Late one afternoon August came into the store. Willis was later still, because he had had more parcels to deliver. Both boys' receipt books showed the customers' signatures.

"There was a big fire up-town," said August secretly to Willis afterwards. "I stopped to see it before delivering my parcels. You just ought to have been there!"

"How long did you stay?" asked Willis, gravely.

"Oh, I don't know!" returned August. "Three-quarters of an hour, maybe. I delivered my

parcels all right afterwards."

Willis did not tell anybody about August's actions.

"I wish he wouldn't tell me about them, either," thought Willis, uncomfortably.

That week August was discharged.

"I happened to be at the fire myself, and saw you," said one of the store's proprietors to August. "The next time you stop to see a fire, you will not have a chance to keep one of our delivery carts waiting an hour while you waste your employer's time watching the firemen. It didn't look well to see our firm's name on that white cart standing idle, just as if we hadn't many customers."

"And you were seen once," added the other proprietor, "with one of our carts standing beside an open block, while a ball game was being played there last week."

As Willis regretfully saw his companion turned away, there came back to him the scene in the semi-darkness under the wharf, when his father said, "A Christian ought to give an honest day's work." "And I will," he muttered.

TIMOTEO

Two white jaw-bones of a whale stood upright in the sunshine, their surfaces showing to a near observer numerous small indentations that caught the dust. The jaw-bones were relics from a little whaling station that had once been in business near the town. Even now whales occasionally wander from the great Pacific into the blue bay on which this old, partly Spanish, California town was situated.

The two white jaw-bones now served the purpose of gate-posts, and stood some six feet high beside the front gate that opened into a garden where red hollyhocks rose higher than the humbled jaw-bones. Inside the gate, the front walk had long been paved with the vertebrae of whales, each vertebra being laid separately.

No one who had not seen such a walk would realize how well whales' vertebrae will answer for paving. Some of the old vertebrae had now sunk below the original level of the walk, so that the path by which a person went to the old adobe house beyond the red hollyhocks was somewhat uneven as to surface.

The long, low house was partly roofed with tiles, and the adobe walls of the dwelling were a yard thick, as any one might see who looked at the windowsills.

On one of these broad sills Isabelita leaned, her black eyes fixed on the bone gate-posts that she could see through the blossoming hollyhocks. There was a displeased expression on the young girl's face. She was watching for her brother Timoteo, who would soon come from school.

"He must go for the cow tonight," resolved Isabelita aloud in Spanish. "I will not go! I wish the Americans had never come to this town! In the old days, my father says, there were no cattle notices on the trees. My father did not have to go for cows every night!" And Isabelita frowned as she remembered the notices about letting cattle run loose upon the highway.

These Spanish—and—English notices were now nailed on pines here and there along the roads, and proved a source of inquiry to wandering Americans who saw the boards with their heading:

"AVISO!!"

preceded by two inverted exclamation points and followed by two others in the upright position—that some Americans have perhaps been wont to think is the only attitude in which an exclamation point can stand, Americans not being accustomed to the ease with which an exclamation point can stand on its head, when used in Spanish literature.

But it was not only with cattle notices and Americans that Isabelita was offended this day. She was in a bad humor, and nothing suited her. Hence it was in no pleasant voice that she called to Timoteo, when he at last made his appearance between the bony gate-posts:

"Hombre bobo, thou must go for the cow tonight!"

Now, "hombre bobo" means much the same as our word "booby," therefore this was not a very soothing manner of beginning her information. To Isabelita's surprise, however, Timoteo answered only "Yes," and, coming in, put his one book carefully away, and then went forth for the

cow, as he had been bidden. Isabelita stared after him. She had at least expected a quarrel.

Isabelita would have been more surprised still, if she could have seen what Timoteo did after reaching the place in the woods where the cow was tethered. He threw himself down; crushing the fragrant, small-leaved vines of "yerba buena" as he fell, and, hiding his face, Timoteo cried in a half-angry, half-hopeless tumult of feeling. The pink blossoming thistles nodded, and the cow looked wonderingly at the lad, but no one else saw or heard him. By and by he sat up.

"Teacher never like me any more," he told himself, his lips quivering. "Americanos tell her my father lazy, my mother no clean. And I try, I try!"

He choked down a sob. A new teacher had come to the public school, a sweet-faced, pleasant-toned young lady, whom Timoteo was ready to obey devotedly from the first time she smiled on the school. Timoteo did want to learn to be somebody! He looked with admiration on the Americans boys' clothes and on an especial blue necktie that Herbert Page wore. Timoteo wondered how it would seem to have a father who worked and who provided his family with plenty to wear. The lad Timoteo meant to be like one of the Americans when he grew up. He would work, instead of lounging about the streets all day, smoking "cigarros."

But alas! That day he had overheard some of the American boy scholars talking to the teacher about the Spanish ones.

"There's Timoteo," he overheard Herbert Page say. "You don't want to have him for your milk-man, Miss Montgomery! I don't believe they keep the milk pails any too clean at his house. Laziness and dirt go together in these Spanish houses!"

Poor Timoteo! He had hoped the teacher and her mother would take milk of him. Miss Montgomery had almost promised to, before this, and one customer for milk made such a difference in Timoteo's home finances!

"But now she never like me any more," Timoteo hopelessly forewarned himself, as he sat among the trees, his eyes yet red with crying. "And I try, I try! I have learned wash my hands clean, when I go school. And I try so hard learn read and write!"

Timoteo sighed heavily. He did not hate those American boys who looked so much nicer than he. He only had a sorrowful, hopeless feeling as he unfastened the cow and started homeward with her.

But when the cow lumbered in through the two white, strange gate-posts at home, she swerved aside a little, and Timoteo saw, standing under the tall red hollyhocks, his teacher, Miss Montgomery. She had a bright tin pail in her hand, and she wanted some milk.

Timoteo's eyes brightened.

"I go wash my hands clean, clean!" he cried, and, disappearing, came back a few minutes after, holding out his palms for Miss Montgomery's inspection.

She smiled, and gave him the pail.

"Poor little fellow!" she thought, as she watched him milking. "I'm afraid some of our American boys don't have charity enough for him."

Timoteo beamed with happiness as he returned the pail brimming with milk. He was Miss Montgomery's milkman regularly after that, and when, on Sundays, Miss Montgomery taught a Sunday-school class of boys, Timoteo always slipped in and listened, though the teacher wondered sometimes if the boy could understand.

There were fair-haired American boys who looked down on Timoteo at school and who made him feel that a Spanish boy was an inferior. Sometimes Timoteo almost felt as if some of the Chinese boys, in the small fishing-village outside the town, were happier than he, for they did not seem to care to know anything but how to dry nets and dry fish. Herbert Page was one of the school boys who always felt superior to Timoteo. Timoteo did not wonder at it. He had a very humble opinion of himself, yet sometimes he wished Herbert would only look at him as he passed by. Herbert would not have spoken rudely to Timoteo. That, Herbert would have considered degrading. He simply ignored the Spanish boys of the school.

One Saturday morning, when Timoteo stood on the edge of the cliffs outside the town, he saw Herbert picking his way out over the long stretches of rocks to seaward; a basket on his arm and a stick in his hand.

"He go to get abalones, and think he can knock them off with a stick!" laughed Timoteo.

Herbert had not long lived in this vicinity, and he did not know the tenacity with which the large, oval-shaped shell, called abalone, or ear-shell, which is so well known and valued for its beautifully colored, irridescent lining, clings to the rock when the shell's inmate is living. At school, the day before, Timoteo had heard Herbert say that he intended going after abalones on Saturday.

"He no get any," prophesied Timoteo, gazing after Herbert's disappearing figure.

Timoteo himself was out abalone-hunting. This was one of the ways by which he occasionally earned a few cents, visitors to the town buying the large shells for curiosities. But Timoteo had with him a long iron spike with which he intended to urge the abalone-shells from the rocks.

The abalone has a large, very strong, white "foot" inside its long shell, and there is a row of holes in the shell itself. It is conjectured that the abalone perhaps exhausts the air under the shell, and so causes the shell to cling more tightly to the rock than ever, through atmospheric pressure. It is very difficult to take an abalone from its rocky home, unless the creature is surprised.

Timoteo, however, was acquainted with abalones, and made good use of his weapon. He clambered far out over the wet rocks for hours, finding abalones now and then, and waging war on these thick, rough ovals that clung so tightly to the rock, the beautiful colors of the abalone-shells entirely concealed. Timoteo saw nothing more of Herbert, during these hours of work.

Timoteo succeeded in getting three abalones, the last an especially large shell. He sat down on the rocks to rest, after the long struggle with this big abalone. The tide was rising. He would go home soon now.

While he sat there, it seemed to him that he heard the sound of outcries. At first he thought it was the gulls. Half in fun he shouted in reply. The distant cries seemed redoubled. Timoteo caught up his basket and long spike. He sprang to his feet.

"Where is it?" he thought, confused with the splash of waves and the toss of spray.

He listened. He sped, shouting, over the rocks in the direction from which the cries seemed to come. He stopped now and then to listen. Yes, it was a human voice that cried for help. It was not the gulls.

"Adonde?" (Where?) "Adonde?" shouted Timoteo, forgetting his English in his excitement.

The answering shouts grew more distinct. Timoteo climbed over the wet rocks till he found himself near a place where the sounds seemed to come from between two rocks. Timoteo saw a boy reach up part way between the two rocks. The boy could not crawl out. The hole between the rocks was not big enough.

"Timoteo!" screamed a voice, and Timoteo recognized Herbert.

"Say!" Herbert called, "run for help, won't you? I was out here abalone-hunting, and I guess one of these big rocks must have been poised just right to topple over. Anyhow, in climbing down here I managed to topple it. It didn't fall on me, but it fell against the other rocks so that there isn't room for me to crawl out of here! I can't make the rock budge, now. And the tide's coming! I thought I'd drown, away out here, alone. You can't do anything with that spike. It needs three or four men with levers. Run! The tide's up to my waist, now! There isn't room between these rocks to crawl out."

For one moment Timoteo stood still and looked at Herbert. Then the Spanish boy turned and flew over the rocks. Leaping from one slippery foothold to another, he rushed toward the cliffs, up the cliff road, on to the clusters of Chinese huts that made a little fishing-village by itself on the edge of the bay. Whatever Spanish or English vocabulary Timoteo used, he aroused two or three Chinamen to forsake their frames of drying fish and cease tossing over the other small fish that lay drying on the ground.

Seizing the long, heavy iron rods with which the Chinese were wont to go abalone-hunting, the three Celestials followed in Timoteo's wake toward the place where Herbert anxiously awaited rescue. There was much prying with the iron rods before the stone was finally tilted enough so that the drenched prisoner was released.

"My father pay you," gratefully promised Herbert to the Chinamen, who nodded and plodded cheerfully back toward their tiny fishing-village.

Herbert looked at Timoteo.

"I'm much obliged to you," said Herbert. "You were good to run for help."

But now that Timoteo had seen the success of his helpers, an abashed silence seemed to have overtaken him. He did not answer. The silence lasted till the two boys reached the cliffs. Herbert grew uneasy. His conscience accused him somewhat.

"Come to my house, Timoteo, and my father will give you something for helping me," promised Herbert uneasily, as the boys climbed the cliffs.

Timoteo shook his head, but he did not look up.

"See here, Timoteo," burst out Herbert, stopping on top of the cliffs, "what's the matter? Do you hate me?"

Timoteo glanced up slowly. His dark eyes were full of appeal.

"You no talk to teacher any more about me?" he besought. "You no tell her my father lazy, we no-'count folks?"

Timoteo's voice shook. He hurried on: "I like teacher. I try be clean. I wash my hands, my face, all time. I do ver' good to the teacher. But my mother differ from your mother. Your mother give you nice clean shirt and clothes. My mother too poor. I try learn, read, spell. I grow like American boy."

It was the appeal of a soul that looked from Timoteo's eyes. Herbert flushed.

"Why, you poor fellow, of course you try!" he answered heartily. "I—I'm sorry if I've ever said anything to the teacher that made you feel badly, Timoteo. I won't do it again, and the other boys sha'n't, either! The teacher knows how hard you try. She said the other day that you were a good boy. Come on up to our house. Won't you?"

But Timoteo smiled, and shook his head, and went away on the long road that led toward home. The heart of the Spanish boy was very happy. He had done good to his enemy, and that enemy was turned into a friend. And the teacher had said that Timoteo was a good boy! She knew how hard he tried!

Timoteo sang for joy as he ran.

"I will learn! I will learn! I shall be like los Americanos!" he sang, and then he remembered how he had been tempted for one instant not to help Herbert. Timoteo shivered at the remembered temptation. He sang again for very joy at having been helped to forgive his enemy.

In the pines Timoteo stopped, and looked upward through the swaying treetops.

"A Dios sea gloria por Jesu-Christo," he murmured reverently. ("To God be glory through Jesus Christ.")

THE VICTORY OF QUANG PO

Jo bent down and slipped under the barbed wire fence that separated the field back of the Chinese fishing-village from the other fields that stretched away to the houses of the California seaside resort under the pines. The wind blew pleasantly in from the sparkling bay.

A large number of frames for drying fish stretched away to the back part of the Chinese field. A great net fifty feet long was spread out on the ground to dry. Jo looked at the wooden sinkers that were fastened along one side of the net and smiled. "They're all on again," he thought.

A line of flounders stretched above the narrow, crooked street of the fishing-village. The flounders looked like queer clothes hung to dry on a clothes-line. There were crates of small fish, packed so that they stood on their heads. Underneath a table of drying fish lay a dead gopher.

Red placards spotted the houses. On the roof of one hut a little paper windmill was turning in the breeze. Back of one hut was a bit of garden inclosed with a fence of branches and containing much mustard. Chinese were washing fish. Shells were exposed for sale, since at any hour visitors from the American settlement might come to traverse the Chinese village, and visitors often bought shells.

Even now, as Jo passed through the street, an old Chinaman beckoned to the lad, and with much mystery unrolled a piece of brown paper and showed a pearl that had come into his possession and that he wished to sell.

Young Chinese girls, with red or yellow-capped babies strapped on their backs, packed or spread the fish. Some little Chinese boys were arranging dried squids in boats drawn up on the shore. On one boat was a kind of wooden crane, holding a hanging pan. There were some burnt sticks in the pan, and the whole contrivance was evidently an arrangement whereby a fire could be made in the boat when it was out at sea.

Jo stepped into one deserted hut, and found it to be a kitchen. An oil can was over some ashes, and there were some queer, big kettles near. In another place were Chinese children eating their breakfast. One child had a Chinese cup, out of which she ate with chop-sticks.

Jo sat down on the edge of the village, and watched three women who were setting off in a boat, intending to row out into the surf to get kelp. Small fish lay drying all over the rocks by the sea-beach near Jo, and a Chinaman was lifting up the fish, and letting them drop again by the handful, while the wind blew away the straw or grass that had become mixed with the fish while

drying. Then the fish were spread upon matting to dry further.

"Ho'lah!" the Chinaman said to Jo.

"Ho'lah!" responded Jo, and the conversation ceased.

For a few minutes Jo watched two or three Chinese boys who were lying on the beach, sifting the white sand through their fingers, hunting for the small, white "rice shells," that American people often buy.

Presently, Jo pulled a sketch-book out of his pocket, and began to draw the collection of queer huts that composed the Chinese village. By and by the Chinaman who had been tossing fish, Quang Po, sat down on the rocks. He looked at Jo for a time, and then came and glanced over Jo's shoulder, smiling. The Chinamen of the village were used to having artists come and plant their easels here and there on the rocks or at the entrance of the narrow street, and draw the village on their canvas. At such times, a small group of Chinamen usually gathered about each artist, and made in their own tongue comments on the drawing. No artist knew the nature of the criticisms made in his very ears.

Jo smiled over his own drawing, as Quang Po inspected it.

"Wha' fo' you do that?" inquired Quang Po, mustering his English.

"This drawing?" questioned Jo. "Oh, you see, my cousin is an artist on one of the city papers. He's older than I am, and he earns a good deal of money. I'm going to learn to make pictures for papers, too. Some day I'll have as good a position as my cousin has."

Quang Po looked puzzled. He did not understand. He always thought American pictures strange. They were not made as Chinese pictures were.

But Quang Po knew that once he had thought other American things strange, too. Some Americans believed in teaching Chinese girls wonderful stories and words from a wonderful Book. When Quang Po's niece had been taught first by such an American, great was Quang's wrath. To increase his indignation, another thing happened. He had burnt incense at the stone in the middle of the fishing-village, in order to find out what day would be most lucky to go fishing, and had found that according to the stone the twenty-second day of the month would be the most lucky day. He had therefore gone fishing on the twenty-second, and he had come back sulky, having caught almost nothing. Then Quang Po's niece had actually laughed at the ill-fortune of her uncle, and had openly expressed her unbelief in the village stone! Quang Po had been very angry for many days, but there came a time when Quang Po's niece induced him to go with her to the little mission school on the hill-side, and there Quang Po heard that for which his soul thirsted. He saw the picture of the Crucified. He understood the story, and he, like his niece, lost faith in the village stone and in the incense-shelves. Quang Po yielded his will and his life to Christ, and the Christian religion seemed strange to him no longer.

So, when this Chinaman handed back the drawing to Jo, Quang Po smiled and said the kindest thing he could think of, although the drawing did not accord with his Chinese ideas of art.

"You draw like Melican," said Quang Po, winding his queue about his head, and preparing to return to work.

Jo felt somewhat ashamed. He wished that he and the other boys had not cut the sinkers off Quang Po's big net. Perhaps Quang Po did not know that Jo had taken part in that mischief, but the thought of it made Jo uncomfortable. So did the remembrance that he and the other boys had slyly at night cut the line that held the flounders high in air above the village street. The flounders now were safely stretched aloft again, but the last time Jo remembered seeing them they were lying in the dust. Jo was not an ill-natured lad, but he had not objected to helping do the mischief. And now Quang Po had spoken kindly of Jo's drawing! Jo winced a little. He was rather proud of his ability as an artist, himself. He turned his attention, to the flaming yellow pair of trousers worn by a small Chinese boy among the numerous Chinese children in the street below. The brilliant color made the little fellow most conspicuous as he toddled here and there. In watching him, Jo tried to forget his own self-reproach.

So far did he succeed in forgetting it that, that evening, when Louis Rouse, one of the other boys whose parents were staying at the resort during the summer vacation, proposed going over to the Chinese village, Jo did not object, though he knew that the purpose of going was to have some "fun," as Louis called it.

"Was the line of flounders up?" asked Louis gleefully, as the boys went over the fields in the dusk. "Let's cut it again! And, say, let's just tip over one of those frames for drying fish in the field back of the village. We can do it carefully, so they won't hear."

Chuckling softly and speaking in whispers only, the boys crept about the fishing-village and did the mischief planned. They pretended that the Chinese village was a fort of enemies, and the boys were a band of soldiers reconnoitering in the dark. They became quite excited over the idea. Doing mischief seemed so much more glorious than it would if they had allowed themselves to think that they were really American boys doing a contemptible thing to quiet, peaceable people.

Just as the boys had quietly tipped over one of the fish-frames, letting the partially dried fish slide to the ground, there were shouts in the dark of the Chinese village.

"The enemy's coming, boys!" whispered Louis, and the lads rushed for the fence.

Some boys caught their feet in the big, spread-out net, and fell, and rolled over, shaking with laughter. Others stuck between the barbed wires of the fence, but all were outside, running across the fields, before the Chinese had sallied out toward their frames. Some distance from the fishing village, the boys dropped breathless behind the large rocks near the sea, and laughed softly together. Jo laughed with the others, though he said, "I sha'n't dare go near the village for a week, till my hand gets well. The barbed wire gave me some pretty deep scratches on the back of one hand, and the Chinamen might guess how I got the marks."

"I've got one on my forehead, I guess," answered Louis, laughing. "It feels so, anyway, and I guess it's bleeding."

The boys went home. Jo was silent on the way.

"I'm tired, laughing so much," he explained to the rest.

He could not help remembering how kind Quang Po's voice had sounded when he said, "You draw like Melican."

During the next week Jo stayed away from the fishing village. The scratches on his hand and on his cheek were all too plainly visible. He occupied his vacation-time in rambling in other places besides the Chinese village.

One morning, in his rambles, he went to what had once been an old adobe dwelling. It was on a hill, quite a distance outside the town, and was not often visited by any one. The old adobe had long ago lost its tile roof, some of the walls had fallen, its former Spanish inhabitants had long since disappeared, and quick-motioned, small lizards now and then ran over the thick, ruined walls that stood, dark and crumbling, against the light-brown of the wild oats on the hill.

Jo climbed on top of one of the higher adobe walls. It still retained its Spanish thickness, being about five feet through, although crumbling at the sides and somewhat uncertain as to uprightness.

"Must have taken a lot of clay to make it," thought Jo.

Just then a little lizard, that had been sunning itself in a niche in the adobe wall, started, disturbed by Jo's proximity, and ran swiftly over to another part of the wall. Jo was anxious to see where the creature went. The boy jumped over a broken place in the wall, and walked on its top, regardless of the fact that the adobe was trembling.

"Guess it's gone where I can't see it," said Jo to himself. "This is a nice sunny place for a lizard. I—"

Jo had stepped a little too far. There was a sudden trembling of the wall. Jo caught at the adobe, which came away in handfuls, and he fell with a large portion of the old wall.

The next thing he knew, he was lying, choked with dust, on what was once the floor of the old Spanish dwelling. He was overtopped by a heavy pile of debris, from under which he struggled in vain to extricate himself. He had one free hand, with which, when he found that other exertions did not avail, he tried to dig himself out; but the more he dug, the more the great pile of adobe above him slid down on his face, till he was in such imminent danger of being smothered that he was forced to desist.

It was almost all he could do to breathe with such a weight upon him, but after a few moments' rest he tried to shout for help. His shouts were not very loud, and soon he had to stop. He lay breathing heavily and looking up at the pile of dull earth.

"I wish," he panted, "I hadn't—come here."

He fervently hoped that some sight-seer like himself might be attracted to the old, out-of-the-way adobe, for Jo was now convinced that it was impossible for him to set himself free. He tried again and again, but always with the same result of semi-suffocation under the sliding debris.

The forenoon passed away. The sun, mounting higher, shone over the dilapidated walls, and fell full on Jo's face. He shielded his eyes with his free hand. The sun beat heavily on his head. Sometimes he thought he heard a rustle in the wild oats, and he cried out for help, but he afterward concluded the sound had been made by the wind or by some lizard.

Gradually the shade began to lengthen in the adobe. Jo looked wistfully at the shadow of the wall as it stretched a little farther toward him, and he sighed with relief when at length the sun that had made his head so hot was guarded from his face by the shadow that reached him. He had lain here a number of hours, and now, as he began to think about evening, he wondered what his father and mother would do when he did not come home. If they had not worried about him during the day, they would be alarmed at night.

"There are some coyotes around the neighborhood," thought Jo.

He knew that a number of poultry-yards had suffered from coyotes. Jo did not suppose that a coyote would usually attack a person. Chickens, lambs, young pigs, were a coyote's prey, but in Jo's present situation he did not care to be visited by a coyote.

"I could throw clods at him," thought Jo. "I hope that would scare him away."

As the sun sank, Jo shouted repeatedly, till his breath was gone. He hoped that some laborer might take his homeward way across the unfrequented hill. But the prospect of such relief seemed very slight, so unused was this place to visitors. Jo saw a wild bird fly far overhead in the glow of the evening sky. The bird could go home, but he could not. He could only wait—how long?

After a while, there was the sound of clumsy feet that jolted by the adobe. Jo heard.

"Come here!" he cried with all his strength. "Come here! Come here!"

The clumsy feet stopped. There was a creaking sound, as of baskets swung to the ground. A face peered through a break in the wall, and Quang Po climbed into the adobe.

"Ho'lah!" he said.

"Ho'lah!" faintly responded Jo.

Quang Po wasted no more words, but set to work. He had not much to dig with, save his tough, yellow hands and a stick, but after nearly an hour's exertion, he released Jo.

"You' bones bloke?" asked Quang anxiously.

"No," responded Jo, wincing. "My arm hurts, but I guess it's only a sprain."

"Me cally fish to lady," explained Quang. "Me go closs hill to lady's house. Hear you holler."

Jo tried to stand, but found himself dizzy and faint, and Quang Po, leaving his baskets, went home with the lad.

Next day, Quang Po, going his rounds, was carrying his fish-baskets past Jo's house. Jo, sitting on the steps, his arm in a bandage, made a sign to Quang to stop.

"My mother wants to buy some fish of you," Jo said.

The fish were bought, and Quang was thanked by Jo's mother for helping her boy. Quang went back to his baskets again, but Jo followed.

"Quang Po," he said, choking a little, "you very good to me."

Quang Po smiled.

"Quang," confessed Jo, "I helped the other boys cut the sinkers from your big net, once."

Quang nodded.

"Me sabe," (understand) he answered, "me sabe long time ago."

"I helped the other boys cut the line that held up your flounders," faltered Jo. "I helped tip over the fish-frame."

Quang Po nodded.

"Me t'ink so," he said.

"What for you good to me?" demanded Jo.

"Me Clistian," responded Quang Po with gravity, as if that one word explained everything. "Clistian must do lite."

Jo looked at him. Quang lifted his heavy baskets on his pole.

"Goo' by," he said.

"Say—Quang Po," burst out Jo, "I'm sorry! I won't bother you any more! I won't let the other boys do it, either! I can stop it."

Quang Po smiled.

"Me glad you solly," he said. "We be good flends, now." And he trotted away, the heavy baskets creaking.

Jo looked after him.

"And I thought you were the heathen!" he whispered.

THE NEW IGLOO.

The sky was lowering. The small storm-"igloo," or round-topped snow house, was full of Eskimo dogs that had crowded in to shelter themselves from the bitter wind. This small igloo was built in front of the door of a bigger round igloo in which an Eskimo family lived. The dogs' small igloo was built where it was, to keep the wind and the cold from coming in at the family's igloo door.

Over the snowy ground a boy, clad in a reindeer coat, came running. His brown cheeks were flushed, and his black eyes were bright with excitement. His lips curved and parted over his white teeth as he chuckled happily to himself about something. He rushed to the very low door of his home, dropped down on his hands and knees, put some slender thing between his teeth, pulled the hood of the reindeer coat up over his head so as to keep the snow from slipping down the back of his neck, and then scrambled quickly through the low opening, pushing aside the dogs, till he reached the interior of the larger igloo. Then the boy jumped up and snatched the thing he had held in his mouth.

"Oh, see, see!" he cried, holding up his treasure. "See what the teacher gave me!"

What he held was the half of a lead pencil, a rarity to him, given to him now as a prize at school.

"And see!" cried the excited lad once more.

He pulled from his reindeer coat a piece of paper. The paper was part of his prize, too. He made some rude marks on the paper with his pencil, and held them where they were visible by the light of the small stone lamp, shaped like a huge clam shell, and burning with walrus oil. The lad's face was illumined with enthusiasm. Never before had he owned such treasures. To think they were his own! He had earned them by good behavior, and diligent, though extremely slow, attempts at learning. A sarcastic laugh came from one side of the platform of snow, that was built around the whole circular interior of the igloo. On the platform lounged the lad's brother, Tanana. "You went without your breakfast yesterday, and ran to school, and now you come back with those things!" laughed Tanana. "You are a dog of the teacher's team, Anvik! He can drive you."

Anvik's black eyes snapped.

"He does not drive me!" cried the boy. "He teaches me to want to learn! I have gone to school many days. I want to learn, to learn! I can make A and B. See!"

He pushed his paper with its awkwardly formed letters farther into the lamp's light. The edge of the precious paper took fire, and with a cry of alarm, Anvik smothered his paper in the snow.

His brother laughed again.

"To-morrow will be another day," he said. "Why should anybody learn for to-morrow?"

But the mother of the two lads stretched out her hand, and took the paper, and looked at the straggling marks. The fat baby, that she carried in the hood of her reindeer suit, crowed over her shoulder at the piece of paper, and Anvik forgot to be angry. He put his pencil in his mother's hand. She looked curiously at the strange new thing.

"You make A, too, mother," urged the boy; and, putting his hand on his mother's, he tried to show her how to make the strange marks.

His mother did little more than touch the paper with the pencil. She smiled at the tiny dark line she had made, and gave back the pencil and paper to the boy. She was proud of him, proud that the strange white man should have thought her boy good enough to give him such queer things. Anvik saw her pride, and felt comforted.

"To-morrow will be another day," murmured Tanana from his lounging place. "The teacher is wrong. He makes that loud sound when school begins. The wise man says the teacher must not make that sound any more, for it will prevent our people from catching foxes and seals."

"It is the school-bell," answered Anvik, knowing that the Eskimo sorcerer had gone to the teacher but a few days previous, to prophesy evil concerning the ringing of the bell. "The foxes and the seals care not for it. Go to school with me, Tanana, to-morrow. The teacher wants you."

Tanana did not answer. He drew a bottle from out of his skin suit and drank. Anvik looked at

his mother. The odor of the liquor spread through the small round house. Anvik had not noticed the odor when he came in, being then too excited over his prize to have room in his head for any other idea. But now he felt a great sadness of soul. Tanana and their father were both beginning to learn to drink. The sailors who came to the shore had liquor with them sometimes, and traded it to the natives.

The teacher at school had told the boys never to touch the sailors' liquor. The teacher said it would steal the boys' souls. Anvik did not understand that very well, but he knew liquor made Tanana and their father cross and lazy, and the laziness kept them poor, and the mother was sad.

Anvik lay long awake that night, on the raised platform of snow in the igloo, and thought.

"My teacher said he heard that at one Eskimo village a canoe came with whisky and the Eskimos pounded on a drum all night, and shouted," thought the lad. "When the morning came, the people were ashamed to look in the face of their teacher. My teacher said I must pray the dear Lord Christ to save Tanana and my father from drinking."

And Anvik prayed in the dark igloo.

The next day came, and Anvik went again to school, but Tanana and the father went off to look at the ice-traps wherein Eskimos catch any stray wolves or foxes.

When Anvik came back at night to the igloo, he met his father and Tanana rejoicing over a bear cub that they had killed. They were bringing it home with them, and were laughing, and shouting, and singing, not so much from joy as from drinking together from the bottle that Tanana had procured.

"We have a bear cub, a bear cub!" shouted Tanana in maudlin tones to his brother. "See how strong the hot water we drink makes us! We come home with a bear cub! Hot water, let us drink hot water!"

Now by "hot water" Tanana meant of course the liquor in his bottle, and when Anvik saw the young bear and the condition his father and brother were in, the lad immediately became very anxious, for the Eskimos are usually very careful not to kill a young bear without having first killed its mother. It is considered a very rash thing to kill the cub first, and when men who are pressed by hunger do it, they are obliged to exercise the strictest precaution lest they should be attacked by the mother-bear, for she will surely follow on the track of the men.

So the Eskimos usually go in a straight line for about five or six miles, and then suddenly turn off at a right angle, so that the mother-bear, as she presses eagerly forward, may overrun the hunters' track and lose her way. The men go on a distance, and then turn as before.

After doing this several times, the men dare to go home, but even there weapons are placed ready for use by the bedside, and outside the house sledges are put up right, for the bear is always suspicious of the erect sledge, and she will knock it dawn before she will attack the igloo. The knocking down of the sledge makes a noise that gives warning to the family.

But when Anvik saw the condition that his father and brother were in, he was greatly frightened, for he did not believe that the liquor had left enough sense in their minds so that they had remembered to turn off in the homeward journey, and, if they had come home without covering their track, there could be no doubt that the mother bear would come to attack the igloo that very night.

But it would do no good to say anything to Tanana and his father. They were far too much under the influence of what they had been drinking. Anvik told his mother his suspicions.

"We will set up the sledge outside the igloo," said his mother, trembling.

"I will have my harpoon ready," answered Anvik bravely. "Do not fear, mother. Perhaps the bear will not come."

They put two harpoons and a spear beside the raised platform of snow in the igloo, after the father and older son were stupidly sleeping.

Then came an anxious time of waiting. The stone lamp's light grew more and more dim to Anvik's drowsy eyes, as he, too, lay on one side of the circular platform. Nothing disturbed his father and brother in their heavy, liquor-made sleep. Anvik's eyes closed at last, even while he was determined to keep awake. His mother, tired with scraping and pounding skins, nestled her chubby baby in her neck, and dropped asleep; too, after long watching. The igloo was quiet, except for the heavy breathing.

A terrible noise arose outdoors. Anvik started into consciousness. There was an uproar of dogs, awakened by the destroying of their small igloo. The sledge fell. The family igloo seemed to shake throughout the entire circle of hard snow blocks. The dome-shaped hut quaked under the attack of some foe.

"Father! Father, wake up!" screamed Anvik, springing to his feet. "The bear! The bear has

come! Father! Tanana!"

He rushed to their side and shook them, but he could not rouse them.

"Wake up! Wake up!" screamed Anvik.

His mother caught one harpoon. Anvik seized another. The great paws were digging into the igloo! The dogs had attacked the bear, but she fought them off, killing some with the powerful blows of her claws.

"Be ready, Anvik!" warned his mother.

The side of the igloo gave way! A dreadful struggle followed. There was a chorus of barks and growls and screams. The bear fought desperately. The struggle and the falling snow partially wakened the father and son, but they were stupidly useless. The dogs attacked the bear's back. Anvik, watching his chance while the bear was repelling the dogs, drove a harpoon into the animal. The bear savagely thrust at the lad, but the dogs leaped up and Anvik's mother drove her harpoon into the enemy. As well as he could in the darkness, Anvik chose his opportunity, and as he had seen older Eskimos do, skillfully avoided the attacks the bear strove to make upon him, till at last he managed to drive the sharp spear to the animal's heart.

All was over at last. The shrieks, the growls ceased, and the dead bear lay among the ruins of the igloo.

The next day Anvik stayed away from school to help build a new igloo. His father and Tanana did not talk much, from the time when they laid the blocks of extremely hard snow in a circle till the time when the inwardly-slanting snow walls had risen to the topmost horizontal block that joined the walls. But, once during the building, when the three workers had taken great flat shovels, made of strips of bone lashed together, and were throwing loose snow against the sides of the new igloo to protect its future inhabitants from the cold, the father stopped, and turning to Tanana said:

"My heart is ashamed! The hot water made us forget to hide the way to the igloo, and when the bear came to kill my wife and children, the hot water made us sleep. My heart is ashamed."

And Tanana, keenly humiliated that his younger brother and not himself had killed the bear, answered, "My heart is ashamed, also."

"The hot water bottle shall not come to my mouth again," resolved the father, with determination.

And Tanana promised the same. The bottle had been broken in the scuffle, but Tanana knew his father's and his own promise included any other bottle of liquor.

"You shall go to the teacher's school with Anvik," decided the father. "The teacher speaks well when he tells the boys that the hot water will steal their souls. If Anvik had drank it, we should all have been killed."

Anvik jumped up from chinking a crack between two snow blocks. He remembered his prayer, and he laughed aloud now with joy for the answer.

"The new igloo is better than the old!" he cried. "The hot water will never go in at the door of our new igloo!"

And in his heart the boy added, "May the dear Lord Christ come into our new home!"

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