

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.



Thoughts on the Life of Moses.

xxxii.

Num. x. 33 to xl. 3.

ORSES' invitation to Hahab was our last month's subject. It is interesting in the Land of Promise later on in the history, though we do not read of Hahab having accepted Moses' invitation at the time. Thus we may have to wait

till we reach the heavenly Canaan, before we know if some whom we have invited to Christ have indeed come to Him. There is yet one other point of interest in the history of Hahab's descendants. Jeremiah gives us the history of a remarkable total-obtaining family—the family of Rechabites (*Jer. xxxv*). Who these Rechabites were, we find by consulting Judges i. 16 with i. Chron. ii. 25, and thus we find that from the Kenites, who were Hahab's descendants, came Heziah the father of the house of Rechab. Moses had said that it would be good for Hahab if he joined himself to Israel, and we see that a special blessing rested upon those members of his race who had been a total-obtaining family for 200 years, and of whom God said that "I would be a Father to the fatherless, and a Friend to the widow" (*Jer. xxxv. 15, 16*).

At last the children of Israel moved forward, guided, as we have seen, by the Pillar of the Cloud, but also led on earth by the Ark of God. The Ark was very holy; it contained the law of God; God's light rested there, and it was an especial sign of God's presence. Israel walked by night, with the Ark before them. We do not see the glory of God, or a Pillar of Fire moving on before us. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (*1 Cor. x. 1*). God is as really with his children now as then. Faith believes it, because He has said, "I am a Father to the fatherless, and a Friend to the widow" (*Jer. xxxv. 15, 16*).

Moses when the Ark moved, and again when it rested, is very beautiful. When the Ark moved onward Moses prayed, "Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee," and when it rested he prayed, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." One prayer was of enemies as *His* enemies, these are just the two great points in a Christian's life. He has to know what *fighting* is. It will be the good fight of *faith* (*1 Tim. vi. 12*). It will be a blessed thing if every *Monday* prayer, "Let Thine enemies be scattered." If we can look upon sin and Satan as *His* enemies, and then believe that if we cry to Him against our enemies as *His* enemies, that He will fight for us, we shall be strong (*Rom. vii. 25*). Thus there is the rest, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." No man has real rest in his heart till he has God there. He is like Noah's dove, restlessly seeking some good abiding-place in vain, till he has his kingdom till back again in the ark. "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." All the "thousands of Israel" were under God's wings. Is that our position? (*Ruth ii. 12*).

In Num. ii. we come to the smiting of Israel. They often murmured; yet when we think of all that God did for them, how wonderful it was that they should do so! How He provided for them—how He cared for them! Yet directly difficulties came they murmured. But is their sin really so enormous? Are there no people like them now—no ungrateful ones now? Are there not many who fret and grumble directly anything goes wrong? Do such realize that murmuring is a sin? We see that it is so in this history, for we find that God was displeased. "With many of them God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness" (*1 Cor. x. 5, 10, 11*). God's fire fell upon the murmurers. God has weapons laid up for sinners. His fire has been used to have destroyed the Assyrians. It fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah (*Gen. xix*). One of the plagues of Egypt was hail mingled with fire (*Exod. ix. 23, 24*). In the case of the murmuring Israelites the fire might have burnt on and on till none of them were left, but in answer to the people's cry, Moses cried to the Lord. Ah! how ready he was to help these ungrateful people! And when he prayed, the fire ceased. What peace is there in the prayer of a righteous man! Truly it is "a precious name" (*St. James v. 16*).



Moses is here a type of our blessed Lord. We, on account of sin, are in danger of God's fire; but Christ pleads, and the world is still spared, "I have been plucked from the fire," in answer to that pleading. Let us not, however, close our eyes to the solemn fact that the fire will come one day, when the "earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." The time of Christ's pleading will be very thin. May it be ours now to be saved by His power!

MARGARET EDWARDS.

Catharine Marsh.

ONE of the best and bravest workers for God have spent many of the earlier years of their lives and seasons of worldly pleasure, and have only given themselves to the Master's service late on in life; they have built on a King's armour firmly at last, and have done manfully, but at first they found it hard to wear and to fight in, they had not proved it.

This was not the case, however, with Catharine Marsh. She was born in a home where Jesus was the Lord of all both in smaller and in greater things, where religion was to move men to ensure outward respectability and a fair name in the world's eye, but a living, breathing power which was the manning of the whole household, which pervaded the home life a bright, pure atmosphere. This it came to pass that Catharine Marsh breathed the highest Gospel Christianity in her very cradle, and that words of prayer and praise were the very first-learned by her baby lips. The Bible, too, was her constant book; it was not a lesson-book to her, but a book full of love and sweetness, of beautiful stories, which stood out in bright graphic pictures before her childish mind.

Dr. Marsh, Catharine's father, was the clergyman of a church in Colchester. He was an earnest and eloquent Gospel minister, a man of rare graces and of high aims, who was fully offered and devoted to the cause of Christ; his wife was a helpmate worthy of him—a true mother in Israel, both in her family and in her husband's sphere. Little wonder that the feet of the children of such parents were set on the road towards the Golden City as soon as they could toddle; that their young faces were lit with something beyond the brightness of youth; that from their earliest days they understood salvation as it is in Jesus to be their lawful inheritance!

That among them were of kindly fire and helpfulness, both to each other and to their poorer neighbours, were not exceptional things to be talked about and prized, but the ordinary and natural result of daily life.

Catharine was the youngest of the family, and as such was her mother's special care and darling. She was the last and most precious plank put into the mother's keel, to train for the heavenly country, and therefore that mother's eyes rested on her with more than usual love in their light. Catharine was in fact a beautiful child, and we can picture her to survive, to outlive at her mother's side all over the period, and looking up into her face as if her young eyes wanted to fully interpret all the sweetness there, while she spoke to some sinners or suffered about the life that brought us; or standing beside her in the agony, earnest expression stamped on the thoughtful brow and on the parted lips, as she listened to some Bible story, or kneeling near her father and while her mother put her hands on her head in prayer into her young mouth, and melted them there with a kiss, which was a stronger prayer itself, for, with Mrs. Marsh, her mother's love was bound

up in the bundle of life with her love for her King above.

From Colchester Dr. Marsh moved to Birmingham, where his sphere of clerical work was yet larger and more active. Here, when Catharine was just entering upon womanhood, Mrs. Marsh was called away from her husband and children to go up to her Master and receive her reward: it was a heavy trial, but it was brightened by an assured hope. The elder children all, by degrees, went from home in different directions, but Catharine remained at her father's side and was his right hand in all he undertook; she was his home-servant, while at the same time her radiant influence spread wide over everything in his parish. Thus she continued for some years to help her father in

work for God and man. Dr. Marsh began to be threatened with blindness from catarrh. After a time he lost entirely his sight, and during this period no words can describe how completely his daughter beamed at once his eyes and his guide, filling his life with light and music in the midst of the darkness in which he moved. As to earthly things he was able, however, to undergo an operation which at length restored his sight, and made him need less her care and watchful attendance.

Dr. Marsh's health had suffered somewhat in other ways besides his blindness, and he was advised to give up active duty for the present. One of his elder daughters was married to Mr. Chalmers, the clergyman of Beckenham, and she proposed that her

son, she happened to find in the same cottage two rough men, who were navvies; suddenly the blessed inspiration came upon her to speak to these men of salvation, and of the precious blood. At first they turned away with hard, rude words, and dark angry looks; one of them was a man on whose lips oaths were more frequent than any other language, and his countenance was not much better. Unintimidated and unmoved, however, Catharine Marsh still continued to deliver her Heaven-sent message, until both men were visibly softened, and consented to kneel and join with her in prayer; they rose with changed hearts, the Master had graciously given her the encouragement of success.

This was the beginning of Miss Marsh's noble work



FLORENCE.—See page 95.

loving and working; both at Birmingham and when he moved to another church at Leamington.

Catharine Marsh had begun very early to show that she had literary talent. When she was little more than a baby, her mother mentioned in one of her letters that little Catharine was playing with a pen, a curiously significant toy for the future authoress. Very soon she began to play with a pen in a yet more practical manner by writing verses which were popular for her age. Her first appearance in print was, however, in "The Golden Chain," and "The Gift in the Cloud," both of which met with some favour from the public.

A severe trouble, if anything in the shape of trouble can be called severe for those whose hearts are firmly anchored on the Eternal Shore, and who live always in the light which shines down from the King's throne, came upon Catharine Marsh and her father, when, in the midst of all their busy, earnest

father and Catharine should come and live with her and her husband: the plan pleased them both, and to Beckenham they went. There Dr. Marsh, as he grew stronger, began to go in an out among his son-in-law's parishes, bringing the good news of salvation; and here God was going to give Catharine a great work to do for Him.

Just at this time the gardens of the Crystal Palace were being made, and Beckenham and its neighbourhood were filled with an innumerable land of navvies, who were engaged in the construction of them. Hitherto the navy had been given up as a hopeless case by every denomination of Christians in the land; no one had set on foot the smallest religious movement for his improvement; no one had stirred a finger, spiritually, to help him; it was reserved for a Christian woman to begin to find out that there was good seed in him for making soldiers of the Lord.

One day, when Miss Marsh was visiting a sick per-

among the navvies, work which has become historic in the annals of English Christianity. She now started a series of cottage meetings for the navvies, and spent the greater part of her time in trying to lift up their lives. She possessed a wonderful power of stirring speech, which went straight to the hearts and minds of these men, and a wonderful gift of gaining influence over them. She spared herself in nothing in her work, and would even, when she was going to be absent for a Sabbath, write a letter in big printed characters to every son of her race, asking them to be at church. "English Hearts and English Hands," a book which, perhaps more than any other that has been written, roused men and women to brave action for the Master, was one of the blessed outcomes of Miss Marsh's work among the navvies.

The influence for good, won by this Christian lady over those rough men, is almost incredible. On one occasion the navvies were in a state of tumultuous

of Cosmo L.; and, encircling it, the sunburst Palazzo Vecchio, the whitened residence of the aforesaid Cosmo. But no chief reason for bringing you hither is that I want to show you the return of the picture presented by the illness on the Lung' Arno. The general impression a sight of the Piazza della Signoria leaves upon the mind is one of beauty and business. Hurrying to and fro, with occasional halts for mutual consultation; stern, stern, resolute faces, which are turned neither to right nor left, but kept doggedly fixed; a significant purity of the feminine element (in a majority in Florence as everywhere else), and, indeed, a remarkably dearth of idlers of all sorts, are the salient features of the scene before us. Members of the picturesque mendicant fraternity, whose existence was painfully evident as we stood gazing up at the gigantic Duomo, are as conspicuous by their absence, wisely selecting the neighbourhood of the churches, and such-like reminders of the ubiquitous tourist, in preference to mingling with countrymen as idlers on business and as shrewd in its transaction as themselves.

The same on the quay and the scene in the great square are about equally animated, although deriving their animation from vastly different motives. A visit to both is essential if you wish clearly to understand the character of the people. Those *Florentines* evince a twofold capacity for business and pleasure, which is not possessed in so eminent a degree by any other Italians. They are passionately fond of the theatre: Rosalind and Bolini are to them gods in the realm of sound; they worship with an ecstacy of devotion in striking contrast to the listless languor of Protestant congregations, their lips in disjunctive laughter, hospitality, and generally derive and ender mutual satisfaction from unlimited social intercourse; yet, whilst they are so ready to give and receive, a small number of the community take a personal pride in the art treasures which have long made his native city a place of pilgrimage for the curious and the artist; and, at the same time, he can devote his life to a fraction the annual commercial value of the influx thus occasioned, in so far as it affords himself and his wife and children a means of support. I do not wish for a moment to insinuate that the admiration he professes for, say, the *Knave* or *the Duncer*, carries anything to do with the coarse, coarse considerations; still, your visit *Florentine* has a keen eye to the main chance, and is not slow to make capital out of your admiring curiosity; the pleasure of a visit to Florence is well worth paying for.

Save among the poorer classes, the picturesque national attire of the *Florentines* has been superseded by "Paris fashions," with, however, a considerable latitude in regard to colour. All Italians revel in bright colours; they are consistent with the "blue Italian weather;" the brilliance of their one and lake; the comely wonders of their renowned national prodigies, the foliage of their luscious, yuccas, and also; their semi-oriental flowers, and the richly-tinted marbles which adorn their churches and private dwellings. The garments of the priesthood still constitute a picturesque element in modern Italian street-life. The religious orders, whose ministrations are carried on in Florence as very numerous, and only a small distinction in their attire. These are priests in brown, priests in white, and priests in red; priests with cowls and priests with charivari; hooded priests and hooded priests. See one of the latter, cowl and bearing a basket, is at this moment advancing towards us with beatific indifference for him. He is a Dominican or Black Friar, and depends entirely on the charity of the charitable for subsistence. Under a flowing sun, and with feet bound by the least of the grooved flippers, he gave the step, he came to the better part of the day, collecting donations for Mother Church. He has not that aloof look peculiar to the "apostolic." He is rather a kind of homes, whose mission is of a soldier description than the genius for hatching evil by the wiles of men of medieval Florence. A nominal humanity, which is against the progress of death itself, a God-given courage, impelling to cheerful ministrations in places visited by the most terrible disasters; a desire to live life instead of accomplishing its destruction; attributes such as these enable the ill-wid, unknown friar who has just halted in front of us, and to whom we could surely have a trifle in anticipation of the next outbreak of cholera.

Do not start and turn pale at the mention of the Great Destroyer, who is actively engaged on the other side of the Mediterranean. He is not likely to penetrate into Florence. The general salubrity of the climate throughout the whole

province, and the extensive improvements effected of late years in the sanitation of its capital (in which respect Florence compares favourably with the other beautiful Northern cities) are not guarantees against such a terrible contingency. Therefore don't expect anything worse than a few isolated cases, such as occurred in England once or twice, and that is pardonable but scarcely judicious indulgence in the fruits of the vine, the olive, &c.

Hitherto we have cast only a passing glance at the shops. Let us now consider the scene opening by visits to a few of the principal ones. Those among our party who have antiquarian tastes will be tempted to visit the "old curiosity shop" round the corner. Here may be purchased copies in marble and alabaster of famous sculptures, in addition to painted antiquities with broken noses and mutilated limbs; ancient vases and ear-jar-jars from Etruria, and repeatedly original paintings by various esteemed Italian masters. The voluminous, respectable proprietor, who looks for all the world like a dishevelled antique, offers to sell us a rare copy of Petrarca, printed by Aldus Mantuinus, which he declares has not its equal in either the Magliabechian Library or the Biblioteca Marciana. On the front page are a dolphin twisted round a shell, and the words "L'Opera di Francesco Petrarca." The paper, and the binding, and finally lay it down and purchase something less costly and of more unimpeachable antiquity.

Silks of home manufacture are the staple commodity of the next shop we enter. The weaving of silk, the pleasuring of it, and the subsequent processes connected with its manufacture into the soft shimmering material we know as *floss*, are carried on in the district of the *Arno*. An article of equal value with the poorest *Florentine* is a silk handkerchief, worn round the throat and tied in a loose knot on the breast. *Florentine* silks are exported to soft and lustrous. The woollen goods manufactured from native fleeces are also of the finest quality.

I have reserved my visit to the jewellers and jewellers till the last, by way of a *bona bouche* long as the *Florentine* goldsmiths have been celebrated for their skill as an accessories in the most precious of the precious metals, their fame in this respect has been surpassed by their universally acknowledged pre-eminence in another department. I allude to the manufacture of mosaic. Look at that pendant, with a miniature of a ruined apostolic standing amid green pastures in the centre; what could be more soft, more delicate, more true to Nature as regards coloring and perspective than this? It would be a marvel of workmanship if it were indeed the miniature-painting I suppose; but our credulity stands a severe test when we are told that it is composed of upwards of a hundred minute particles of various colored marbles. Or again, look at that bracelet on which the gayest of dyed pearls, complete to the very claws at the end of its diminutive legs! Look at the deceptive layings on that pair of golden-scented studs, your ears are finally prepared to be struck speechless with wonder at sight of the most intricate handiwork in its composition—a beautiful, brilliant with contrived roses, butterflies, and beetles, composed entirely of precious stones. Looking at these, surely specimens of *Florentine* handiwork, we can understand how the excitement and application necessary to their production are hardly consistent in longevity. As a matter of fact, women in modern Italy attain to a good old age. With this fatal result of their labours in view, these poor people might with truth exclaim that "The spirit of murder works in the very means of life."

Having come into Florence, it would be a difficult task to forget it. Although its greatest glories are unquestionably of the past, those which are still left are quite sufficient to excite the sentimentalist.

"Florence" beneath the sun,
Of Cities famous one
Excels the Sherry, and we are not to be induced to quarrel with him on account of the definition.

VENERUS IMAY.

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