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In the Study.

Barzillai.

'Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old.'—2 Sam 19^{32}.

'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.'—Pr 16^{31}.

THERE was a favourite saying of Ptolemy the astronomer which Bacon thus quotes in Latin and Matthew Arnold in English: *Quum fini appropinquas, bonum cum augmento operare*—'As you draw near to your latter end, redouble your efforts to do good.'

It is surely a fitting quotation with which to open a study of Barzillai the Gileadite, for in him we see a grand fulfilment of the precept. He was one whose sympathies seemed to keep alive, if not to grow, as years advanced. Long before St. Peter wrote his Epistles, Barzillai had been taught by the one Master to 'put away all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil-speakings'; and he had adopted St. Paul's rule for rich men, 'that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate.'

I.

A Highland Chief.

The few verses in the seventeenth and nineteenth chapters of Second Samuel tell a beautiful little story. It is of the kind that, although read a thousand times, never grows old. David had been chased about by a most cruel disloyalty and unfilial ingratitude and rebellion; things had indeed gone very hardly with him.

He and his companions had taken refuge in the strong fortress at Mahanaim in Barzillai's country. Owing to their hurried flight, the fugitives were wanting in almost all the necessaries of life, and they could hardly fail also to have been a little apprehensive of the kind of welcome the Gileadites would extend to them. But if so, their fears were soon set at rest. Three of the richest and most influential men in the district at once came to their aid—Shobi the son of Nahash, and Machir the son of Ammiel, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim. They brought beds, and cups, and wheat, and barley, and honey, and butter, and sheep—all, in fact, that was needed—for David, and for the people that were with him: for they said, 'The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness' ($2\ Sam\ 17^{29}$).

1. Of Shobi and Machir we already know a very little; but of Barzillai's previous history we know next to nothing. We are not even told where exactly Rogelim was. But the few facts stated with regard to him are suggestive. In 19^{31} we read that 'Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim,' and conclude that Rogelim was among the mountains of Gilead. Again in v.[32] we are told that he was 'a very great man.' Barzillai enjoyed the 'blessing of the Old Testament' prosperity; and dwelling as he did among the hills, his only occupation and main way of becoming rich must have been as a farmer.

He was rich apparently both in flocks and in servants, a kind of chief or sheikh, not only with a large establishment of his own, but enjoying the respect, and in some degree able to command the services, of many of the humble people around him.

Sheikh Fareij spent the evening in our tent, and greatly interested us by his dignified manner and intelligence, and by a certain air of sadness that pervaded his whole conversation and deportment. He lamented that the ancient, generous customs of the Bedawîn were being corrupted by Turkish oppression. They now robbed one another, and even murder is often added to plunder. 'I myself,' he added, 'live day by day by the life of this good sword,' striking his hand fiercely upon the formidable tool at his side. He admitted that, without my guide from the emeer, I could not have reached his tent in safety; and that without similar assistance from himself, I should not be able to proceed on the morrow round the eastern shore of the lake. Of the truth of this I had certain and rather startling evidence next morning; for I found myself suddenly confronted by a troop of the most savage Bedawîn I ever encountered, and they made no secret of the fact that they were restrained from plundering us solely by the guard from Sheikh Fareij.[1]

2. Barzillai was a man of courageous loyalty. His name signifies a man of iron. Such indeed he was. No lath painted to look like iron was he, but a veritable man of iron. He stood like a tower of strength foursquare to all the winds that blew. And the winds were very tempestuous.

[1] W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, 353.

It was dangerous just then to associate oneself publicly with King David, to help or succour him and his retinue. Cautious people were specially cautious. The sitters on the fence were numerous. Trimmers abounded as they are wont to abound in danger's hour. Those whose eye was ever for self-interest hesitated and indeed declined to rally to David and his forlorn band.

But what did Barzillai do? He with a faithful few like minded left all 'prudential' considerations to take care of themselves, and forth he fared from his castle at Rogelim to David's headquarters at Mahanaim.

Living as he did in a sequestered part of the country, there was no call on him to declare himself at that particular moment; and if Absalom got the upper hand, he would be sure to punish severely those who had been active on his father's side. But none of these things moved Barzillai. He was no sunshine courtier, willing to enjoy the good things of the court in days of prosperity, but ready in darker days to run off and leave his friends in the midst of danger. He was one of those true men that are ready to risk their all in the cause of loyalty when persuaded that it is the cause of truth and right.

Jaurès was a patriot in the highest and purest sense of the word. 'He loved France with the Hebrew prophet's love of Israel, he loved her with an intensity of which the ordinary patriot is incapable. He could 'easily scorn delights and live laborious days' for her welfare. He had a vision of her glorious destiny in which he really believed as few men believe in anything, and love of one's country was in his eyes a natural, a healthy, and a fundamental instinct.[1]

3. Barzillai was ready not only to risk all but to lose all, if necessary, in a cause which appeared so obviously to be Divine, all the more because he saw what a blessing David had been to the country. Why, he had actually made the kingdom. Not only had he expelled all its internal foes, but he had cowed those troublesome neighbours that were constantly pouncing upon the tribes, and especially the tribes situated in Gilead and Bashan. Moreover, he had given unity and stability to all the internal arrangements of the kingdom. What a grand capital he had made for it at Jerusalem. He had planted the ark on the strongest citadel of the country, safe from every invading foe. He had perfected the arrangements for the service of the Levites, what a delightful service of song he had instituted, and what beautiful songs he had composed for the use of the sanctuary. Doubtless it was considerations of this kind that roused Barzillai's loyalty to such a high pitch.

[1] Margaret Pease, *Jean Jaurès*, 126.

Let Christian men lay it on their consciences to pay regard to the claims under which they lie to serve their country. Whether it be in the way of serving on some public board, or fighting against some national vice, or advancing some great public interest, let it be considered even by busy men that their country and, we must add, their Church have true claims upon them. Even heathen and unbelievers have said, 'It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country.' It is a poor state of things when in a Christian community men are so sunk in indolence and selfishness that they will not stir a finger on its behalf.

The greatest service rendered by Young Italy was through its martyrs. In one city after another, men mounted the scaffold in behalf of their country which was to be, and that scaffold became a shrine of patriotism. Hundreds of enthusiasts languished in prisons, but not forgotten. Their sacrifice stimulated the zeal of their comrades and attracted the attention, if not the sympathy, of the timid or torpid public. The smug conservative might feel inclined to exclaim, 'Poor fool! Another of Mazzini's dupes!' but he could not dismiss the fact of the 'poor fool's' devotion, nor could he deny that under the magic of Mazzini's evangel Italy had become a cause for which Italians cheerfully risked fortune, home and life. The dumb populace that watched a handful of zealots being led to execution or a coffle of heavily chained victims being driven like beasts to the galleys, could not fail to be impressed.[2]

II.

A King's Offer.

1. With the death of its leader, the rebellion against David may be said to have ended, but to the sorrow-stricken father victory at such a price seemed an almost greater calamity than defeat would have been. It needed the remonstrances of Joab to rouse him from his grief and lead him to think of his duty to his people. On the homeward journey David followed the same route as that by which a little while before he had fled, and on the bank of the Jordan he had his final parting with Barzillai. The loyal chieftain, notwithstanding his eighty years, had come all the way from his upland farm to bid farewell to his king, and see him safely over Jordan. And as David remarked the old man's devotion, and remembered his former

[1] W. R. Thayer, *The Life and Times of Cavour*, i. 241.

favours, the wish seized him to attach him still more closely to his person. 'Come thou over with me,' he said, 'and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem' (2 Sam 19[33]).

Barzillai had been helpful to David in his trials and triumphs; but it was not the mere food (17[28. 29]) which he, with others, brought that gave strength to David's heart and raised his hope in God. The hoary head, crowned with the glory of true goodness, had been more to David than all the material supplies. To have the friendship and the kindly attentions of a venerable man of God was to the king a real spring of new life and vigour. The vain and trifling young man might go off to take sides with rebellion, but age, with its wisdom, its deep experience, its large-heartedness and settled piety, was with him. As cold water to a thirsty soul was the loyalty and affection of so honoured a man. It is a blessing and real help to have the favour and sympathy of men who have had large experience in life, and have won for themselves imperishable honours; and, though the infirmities of age may seem to set a narrow limit to the usefulness of the aged, yet their moral power is very great. Their influence is quiet, but real and pervading. The tone they impart to home affects the world outside, and their known interest in Christ's servants and the work they are doing is power and cheer to many a heart.

Barzillai had seen enough of David to know that what the king said he meant, and that if he chose to go with him, honour and position awaited him at the court. But he would not be moved. His grey hairs, if nothing else, stood in the way. 'How long have I to live,' he answered, 'that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?' (v.[34]). I am too old, that is, for such a life as would there be expected of me. And, after all, why should conduct such as mine meet with so great a reward? No! let me go a little way over Jordan with the king, and then, 'Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother.'

Barzillai knew that David's court was no place for him; he had been bred on the mountains of Gilead, and his habits suited only a simple country life. The court might be better, but he could not fit into it. But there was his boy Chimham—'Behold thy servant Chimham'; 'let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee' (v.[37]). With a plea so expressed David could not but acquiesce: 'The king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place . . . and Chimham went on with him' (vv.[39. 40]).

The late Dr. Husband of Dunfermline called on a friend when he was preparing to set out on a short journey, and was beginning to ask him some questions as to the place grace held in the Divine economy. 'Come away wi' me, and I'll expound that; but when I'm speaking, look you after my feet.' They got upon a rough bit of common, and the eager and full-minded old man was in the midst of his unfolding the Divine scheme, and his student was drinking in his words, and forgetting *his* part of the bargain. His master stumbled and fell, and getting up, somewhat sharply said, 'James, the grace o' God can do much, but it canna gi'e a man common sense'; which is as good theology as sense.[1]

2. Chimham took his father's place, and, with his descendants, long remained in Western Palestine, a witness of the loyalty of the Eastern tribes.

David and Barzillai never met again on earth. Before David had finished his career, the venerable man had passed away to his blessed reward. But it could not but be, as was evident from his charge to Solomon, that throughout his life David cherished the memory of the good old man, and found amid the cares and sorrows of life much comfort therein. The vision of that bent form, laden with precious fruits of a long and godly experience, bending before him and bidding him God-speed in his high vocation, would often rise up and again cheer his spirit.

The heart well purged by humility is so deeply conscious of its unworthiness, that to receive acts of kindness always excites some emotion of gratitude, of shame, of surprise, or all three together—of gratitude for the benefit, of shame upon thinking how ill it is deserved, of surprise that our brethren should bestow upon us what we so little merit.[2]

Dean Stanley in his *History of the Jewish Church* says that 'four miles out of Jerusalem, under the King's own patronage, a celebrated caravanserai for travellers into Egypt—the first halting-place on their route—was founded by Chimham, son of Barzillai, on the property granted to him by David out of the paternal patrimony of Bethlehem. The caravanserai remained with Chimham's name for at least four centuries, and, according to the immovable usages of the East, it probably was the same which, at the time of the Christian era, furnished shelter for two travellers with their infant Child, when "there was no room in the inn," and when they too from that spot fled into Egypt.'[3]

[1] J. Brown, *Rab and his Friends*, ii. 69.

[2] D. C. Lathbury, *Correspondence on Church and Religion of William Ewart Gladstone*, ii. 159.

[3] A. P. Stanley, *Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church*, ii. 154.

III.

A Beautiful Old Age.

1. Barzillai contemplated his death. 'That I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother,' is the pathetic desire he expresses to David (2 Sam 19[37]).

He understood what was suitable for old age. Many a man, and woman too, perhaps, even of Barzillai's years, would have jumped at King David's offer, and rejoiced to share the dazzling honours of a court, and would have affected youthful feelings and habits in order to enjoy the exhilaration and the excitement of a courtier's life. In Barzillai's choice, we see the predominance of a sanctified common sense, alive to the proprieties of things, and able to see how the enjoyment most suitable to an advanced period of life might best be had. It was not by aping youth or grasping pleasures for which the relish had gone. Some may think this a painful view of old age. Is it so that as years multiply the taste for youthful enjoyments passes away, and one must resign oneself to the thought that life itself is near its end? Undoubtedly it is. But even a heathen could show that this is by no means an evil.

'It is not for an old man like me to go up to Jerusalem,' Dr. Whyte makes Barzillai say in his *Bible Characters*. 'My time is past to be eating and drinking as they will eat and drink in Jerusalem when God sends back their king to his people. I would be a burden to myself and to the king's servants. I shall need all my time; for I am fourscore years old this day, and how shall I go up with the king to Jerusalem?' 'Who can help loving the octogenarian Barzillai?' adds Dr. Whyte, 'with his "courtesy in conversation," and when, like Pompey in Plutarch, he "gave without disdain, and took with great honour."'[1]

2. Though we are never distinctly told so, we cannot doubt that Barzillai was a religious man. And as it was in gratitude to God for all that He had done to him that he first showed kindness to God's anointed, so it was in the same humble and trusting spirit that he accepted old age, and all that it involved when it came. That is by no means always the case. Are there not some who, as they look forward to the time of old age, if God should ever permit them to see it, do so with a certain amount of dread? They think only of what they will be called upon to abandon—the duties they must give up, the pleasures, so dear to them now, they must forgo. But to Barzillai, the presence of such disabilities brought, as we have seen, no disquieting thoughts. He could relinquish, without a sigh, what he was no longer fitted to enjoy. He desired nothing but to end his days peacefully in his appointed lot. Enough for him that the God who had been with him all his life long was with him still.

Titus was instructed to exhort the aged men of Crete to be 'sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.' It is a grievous thing to see grey hairs dishonoured. It is a humiliating sight when Noah excites either the shame or the derision of his sons. But 'the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' But what of those who dishonour God, and their own grey hairs, and the Church of Christ by stormy tempers, profane tongues, drunken orgies, and disorderly lives? 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret! To their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!'[2]

To-day, my friend is seventy-five;
He tells his tale with no regret;
His brave old eyes are steadfast yet,
His heart the lightest heart alive.

He sees behind him green and wide
The pathway of his pilgrim years;
He sees the shore, and dreadless hears
The whisper of the creeping tide.

For out of all his days, not one
Has passed and left its unlaid ghost
To seek a light for ever lost,
Or wail a deed for ever done.

So for reward of life-long truth
He lives again, as good men can,
Redoubling his allotted span
With memories of a stainless youth.[3]

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Virginibus Puerisque.

I.

June.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE LEAVES.

'All the trees of the field shall clap their hands.'—Is 55^{12}.

1. Boys and girls who are well are nearly always happy. They feel that it is a good thing to be alive. But of course doing what is wrong spoils everything. A Hindu trader in India said to a convert, 'What medicine do you put on your face to make it shine so?' 'I put nothing on,' answered the convert. 'What do you put on?' was again asked. 'Nothing; I don't put anything on.' 'Yes, you do, all you Christians do. I've seen it in Agra, and I've seen it in Bombay.' The convert laughed, and said: 'Yes, I'll tell you the medicine. It is having a happy heart.' That happy heart, boys and girls, is a thing that never goes with doing mean actions. You yourselves know that.

There should be much to make everyone happy in this leafy month of June. A blind girl used to be taken to walk in a wood near her own home, and she told me how she loved that wood in the sunny summer days. She felt the sun although she did not see it. 'Sometimes Jennie comes with me,' she said, mentioning another blind friend, 'then we sit underneath a tree and listen to the sound of the leaves. Sometimes we try to guess the names of the different trees.' 'They do clap their hands for us,' she added.

2. The chapter in Isaiah from which your text is taken is a very beautiful one. It is part of a great poem; and, as with other great poems, even when one does not understand every word of it a good reader can make this one seem like a piece of music. What is it all about, do you think? Just getting happiness from the things that God gives us for nothing—'without money, and without price,' like the music of the leaves on a June day, or the happiness that the Indian found from having formed a friendship with God.

I wonder how the people to whom it was first addressed felt about it. They were men and women some of whom were sad, and others of whom were careless. They were really prisoners of war, and had been exiled from their homes. You boys and girls have learned to think affectionately of prisoners of war, have you not? Far away from their beloved country, in the great and busy city of Babylon, the sad ones remembered the old days, and the old home. Just as it is with our exiles those of long ago often longed to be back within sight of their own Jerusalem. Sometimes their conquerors would say, 'Give us a song.' 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' But their hearts were too sad for singing: you may know what it is to be told to sing when something is bringing a lump into your throat.

The others, the busy and careless ones, were the boys and girls who had been born in exile, and who had grown to be men and women in Babylon. To them, Babylon had, in a sense, become a home. As with the people of Alsace and Lorraine, the language of the country had become their language, and the ways of the great city had become their ways. They had learned to make money; some of them had become very wealthy indeed. So you see it was natural for them not to have the feeling of hatred towards their conquerors that the older generation had. They drank of the streams of Babylon and forgot about Zion. But I like to think of the little remnant who could remember the time when their old home meant a place where God was master, and when doing His will was the great ambition of their lives.

3. At last, after many years, these exiles were to be allowed to return to Jerusalem, and you can understand how it was that they were not all enthusiastic about going. The money-makers did not want to leave Babylon, and the spirit of the fathers and mothers was broken.

Isaiah's message was meant for both. There was an air of June about it. He did not scold the money-makers. He tried to turn their thoughts to higher things: the mountains, the hills, and the beauty of summer when the leaves of the trees seem to clap their hands with joy. Wasn't he a wise old prophet when he thus began his message to the workers who had become sordid in their efforts to get gain: 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come,

buy wine and milk without money and without price'?

4. Boys and girls, God's best blessings can be had without money and without price. Well do your exiled fathers and brothers know that. They cannot buy a sight of their native hills or a whiff of the sea air they love so well. But they know that nothing can separate them from your love or the love of the Great Father.

The trees of June bring us a message of God's love. How can we hear it? By having a clean heart. That is got by making Jesus Christ our Friend; no evil can dwell where He is.

Isaiah wanted to encourage the Israelites to return to their native land when he spoke of the beauty of God's earth, and how even the trees would cheer them on their way. Already God is saying to you boys and girls, 'I have a great work for you to do in this world; make up your minds to get ready for it. It may be harder work than your grandfathers ever had to do, but though in the meantime there is much sorrow in the world, God's sun still shines, and the leaves of the trees clap their hands as they did when they cheered on the captive Israelites to Jerusalem.'

But when the summer-time is here I love another book,
Not told upon a printed page, but gurgled by a brook,
And whispered by the eager pines, and thundered by the sea,
And gossiped in a dialect by every passing bee.
There is no story in the world which I have ever seen
To equal Nature's volume, where the leaves are all of green.

The book is ever open at the most exciting page,
To suit the reader old or young, of any taste and age;
The pictures are in colours fair, the plot is ever new—
However wild or wonderful, you know it all is true.
The book will last a lifetime long, and best of all, my friend,
Each summer 'tis 'continued,' and it never has an end![1]

II.

The Trifles that Count.

'Who hath despised the day of small things.'—Zec 4^{10}.

To-day I want to tell you two stories. The first story is about a weed, and the second is about a flower.

1. Did you ever hear of the Khaki Weed? It is a great pest in some parts of South Africa. And how do you think it came by its strange name? Well, it was called the Khaki Weed because it was brought to South Africa at the time of the South African War. Before that time the weed was unknown in that country, but during the war great quantities of forage were brought from the Argentine, and among the forage were some seeds of this weed. Wherever the forage was unloaded the seeds blew about; and some of them liked the new ground and took root.

That was the beginning of it, but by no means the end. For the plant is one of those that stretch along the ground, and wherever a seed took root and grew the plant crept a little farther every day. Nowadays the weed has overgrown whole districts and has become such a nuisance that the farmers are ordered to destroy it. And all because of a few mischievous seeds that were blown about.

2. The second story is about a flower. So far as I know it never was more than one little flower. It didn't spread like the Khaki Weed, and yet it did a tremendous lot of good all by itself.

It grew more than a hundred years ago, in the days when Napoleon Bonaparte was Emperor of France.

There were many men in France then who did not agree with the Emperor or approve of his conduct, and some of these men Napoleon threw into prison. Among them was a wise scholar called Charney.

Now Charney was a clever man, but he had made one big mistake. He had given up believing in God. He had been so long in prison that he thought God had forgotten him, as the Emperor had, and that He no longer cared for him. So he wrote on the wall of his cell, 'All things come by chance.' He was so unhappy that he did not believe there was a God who watched over and cared for His creatures here below.

But one day when Charney was pacing up and down his cell he saw a tiny green blade trying to push its way through the hard ground quite near the wall. It was a tiny plant. How it came there I don't know. Perhaps God just sent it. The prisoner became interested in the little plant. It was the only living thing in the cell besides himself, and it became his friend and teacher. Day by day he watered it, and tended it, and watched it growing.

By and by a bud came on the plant, and presently the bud opened into a flower—a beautiful

[1] A. F. Brown, in *A Garland of Verse*, 198.

flower, white and purple and rose-coloured, with a white fringe round the edge.

Then Charney began to wonder and to think. He thought that if God could take so much care and trouble about a little prison flower, surely He must care for him. So he rubbed out the words he had written on the wall—'All things come by chance'—and in their place he wrote, 'He who made all things is God.'

Now in that great prison there was another prisoner whose little daughter used to visit him. And this little girl became acquainted with Charney. She found out about the flower and about Charney's love for it, and after that she often came to see it and the man who had befriended it.

One day she told the story of the flower to the jailer's wife, and the tale went from one to the other until at last it reached the ears of the beautiful Empress Josephine, Napoleon's wife. The Empress was very much interested. She was sure that a man who could care so much for a little flower could not have done anything very bad, and she persuaded her husband to set Charney free.

So at last Charney received his liberty. When he left the prison he took with him the little plant that had procured his release and, better still, had taught him to love and to trust God. And he planted it in his own garden and tended it ever after with the greatest love and care.

3. Now I don't need to say much about these two stories, but perhaps you have noticed that, each in its own way, they tell us very much the same thing—not to despise little things.

(1) *Don't despise the little bad things.*—They have a tremendous power for evil. Don't think it doesn't matter if you are just a little cross, just a little selfish, just a little mean, just a little untruthful or dishonest. Nobody ever started by being a big bit of any of them. These faults grow and spread like the Khaki Weed, and if we let them get big and strong it is almost impossible to root them out. The only safe way is to pluck them up when they are seedlings.

(2) And *don't despise the little good things.*—They have a tremendous power for good.

God takes as much trouble to make a speck of dust as to make a universe, and Jesus taught men the value of small things—a mustard seed, a grain of corn, a lily, a sparrow, a little child.

Take trouble to do the little things well even though it is only running an errand, or writing a page in a copy-book. Once a boy at Rugby thought it did not matter how he wrote. Many men of genius, he said, wrote badly. And when he grew up he became an officer in the British Army and went out to fight in the Crimea. One day he copied an order so badly that it could not be properly read and was incorrectly given, and, as a result, many lives were lost.

(3) Once more, *don't despise the little opportunities* of being kind and doing good. Don't wait for the big ones to come along. Seize the small ones. Perhaps the big ones may never come your way, but the small ones may have big results. Remember the little prison flower. You can never tell where a good deed may end. You can never tell what a lot of good you may accomplish just by doing your duty and being helpful and loving.

> Do what you can, being what you are;
> Shine like a glow-worm, if you cannot like a star,
> Work like a pulley, if you cannot be a crane,
> Be a wheel greaser, if you cannot drive the train.

III.

Pleasant Words.

'Pleasant words are as an honeycomb.'—Pr 16^{24}.

If King Solomon had lived in our day perhaps he would have written, 'Pleasant words are like sugar, sweet and wholesome,' for that is what he means in our text. But there was neither cane sugar nor beet sugar in Solomon's time, and any sweets he had were made with honey; so when he wanted to describe something sweet and good at the same time he compared it to the honey in the honeycomb.

Now, none of us is as wise as Solomon, but we are like him in this, that we love to hear pleasant words. We like when people say pleasant things to us. For instance, we like to know that we have done any piece of work well. If some one says of it, 'That's exceedingly good!' we feel that all the trouble we have taken is worth while. The kind word pays us for our labour.

1. But there are pleasant words *and* pleasant words. The first kind we are going to speak about is the *wrong kind*—the pretence kind, the kind that we call 'flattering.' Flattering words may sound all right, but we know they are false beneath. They are like poison hid in jam. The person who flatters you usually does it for a purpose, and

when a little voice inside tells you that what he says is untrue, beware!

A flatterer is like the toad who pretended to be a saucer of meal. He was a very cunning specimen —that toad. He lived in a farmyard near the chicken-coops, and he noticed that the flies which were his favourite food came in the evening to get supper from the saucers of meal and water which had been set out for the chickens. 'Aha!' thought the wily old boy, 'why shouldn't I pretend to be a saucer of meal?' So he hopped along to one of the saucers, and rolled himself over and over in the meal, till he looked so mealy that you couldn't tell where the meal ended and the toad began. Then he lay very still and waited. By and by the first fly arrived; he was followed by two or three, and they were followed by still others, and soon the pretence saucer of meal was covered with flies. But alas! for any silly fly who ventured too near the toad's mouth. Out popped Mr. Toad's tongue, and that poor fly disappeared for ever. The words of a flatterer may seem innocent and mealy, but take care! there's danger beneath.

2. But what about the right kinds of pleasant words? for there are many right kinds. (1) Well, the commonest kind, and perhaps for that reason the kind that boys and girls think least about, is the *polite kind*. It is rather remarkable that there are lots of young people who seem to feel that politeness is unnecessary. More than that, they positively avoid it, as something that is affected, something that is good enough for 'softies,' but certainly not for them. So they drop out 'Excuse me,' and 'I beg your pardon,' and 'I'm so sorry,' and even 'Please' and 'Thank you,' and they stick in grunts instead. Now, grunts are very well for a certain animal whose native language, so to speak, is a grunt, only he spells it 'grumph.' He is a very good animal in his way, but we should never dream of asking him into our house or inviting him to sit down at our table. He and his grumphs would be quite out of place there. And so are your grunts, boys and girls. Leave them to the poor beast they belong to, and use your own language.

(2) I think that the second kind of pleasant words is the *kind kind*. If we could read Hebrew we should find that the word King Solomon used for 'pleasant' meant 'love-breathing.' That is just what kind words do—they breathe love. If you want to make friends with anybody, how do you set about it? Do you snub them every time they speak to you? Do you take no interest in what they are doing, or throw cold water on all their plans? Of course not! You know better than that. You listen eagerly to what they have to say, and you try to be keen on what they are keen on. If they are in a difficulty you try to help them out of it; and if you can't get them out of it you say how vexed you are, and that alone helps no end. If you want to have a friend and be a friend your words must be kind words. You have only to look around you to see that this is true. Look at the boy who prides himself on squashing other fellows! He'll soon be left with nobody to squash. Look at the girl with the nippy tongue! She can nip away if she likes, but nobody will want to come within yards of her.

(3) The third kind of pleasant words we may call the *wholesome kind*. These are the words that are not only good to hear but help us to be better and do better. If you are feeling in despair about your work or anything else, and things are looking 'blue,' you know how tremendously it bucks you up if somebody gives you a word of praise. Why! you forget the blueness all in a minute. Instead of looking blue everything suddenly looks rose-coloured, and you go ahead double speed because of that little word of encouragement. There are people in this world who don't require 'a good talking-to' to set them agoing. What they are needing is just a little pleasant word of praise.

Then you know what pleasant words do to a quarrel. Pleasant words and a quarrel simply can't live in the same room. If you bring in pleasant words the quarrel immediately dies. It can't help it. There's something in a pleasant word that kills it outright.

Pleasant words are splendid for envy too. Envy is a nasty green feeling, but if you put a few pleasant words alongside it the greenness mysteriously fades away. The pleasant words act like magic, and hey presto! it is gone.

3. If we are going to require such a lot of pleasant words, where shall we manage to get them? We must have a store somewhere that we can go to when we need them. We must have more words than those that are on the tip of our tongue at the moment. That is common sense.

But we shan't have much difficulty in solving the problem, for pleasant words don't really belong

to the tip of our tongue at all. They belong by right to the heart. The tongue merely says them, but the heart means them. Now the heart is not only a storehouse, it is also a factory working day and night. The kind of goods it manufactures depends upon the one from whom it takes its orders. If it takes its orders from someone whom we all know, whose name begins with the fourth letter of the alphabet, then the thoughts and words and deeds which it manufactures will be hideous and cruel and wicked. But if it takes its orders from the King of kings, its thoughts and words and deeds will be lovely and loving, true and gentle, sweet and pleasant.

Boys and girls, let us see to it that we take our orders from Christ. Then we shall find it easy to be courteous, easy to be loving, easy to be helpful, easy to be generous, easy to speak pleasant words.

IV.

Stories for Any Day.

The title of the book is *Stories for Any Day*. It is published by the Pilgrim Press in Boston, U.S.A. The cost is one dollar net. The author of it is Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. This is how the stories began:

'There's nothing but the chimney of the Old Place left, Grandfather,' John said as they walked back from the orchard with their pockets full of apples.

'That's all,' Grandfather answered with a twinkle in his eyes.

'Why don't you tear down the old chimney, Grandfather?' John asked, 'now that you have the big new house. It's nothing but a pile of old bricks out here in the field.'

'I am keeping it because it tells me stories,' Grandfather said. 'Every time I go by it when the wind blows down through it, that old chimney has something interesting to say to me.'

'Oh!' said John, with his eyes very big now. 'Let's stop a minute by it, Grandfather, and see if it tells us a story.'

So they stopped in the field by the old chimney, and, suddenly, along came the wind, singing through the bricks.

Whoo-oo-oo, went the wind.

'What does it say, Grandfather?' asked John.

'It says that one fall, when I was only five years old, something wonderful happened. Your great-grandmother went for a whole day's journey on the stage to sell some cloth she had spun and woven, and when she came back she brought me, what do you suppose?'

'Oh, I don't know. Please tell me,' begged John.

'A little red rocking-chair!' Grandfather said. 'And when it was cold and stormy, I sat and rocked and rocked in the little red rocking-chair in front of the chimney, and roasted apples and chestnuts, and read about Robinson Crusoe.'

'Oh, how nice!' John said.

Suddenly the wind sang again through the bricks of the old chimney.

Whoo-oo-oo, went the wind.

'What does it say now, Grandfather?' asked John.

'It says that once, a long, long time ago, when I was only six years old, there came a very cold, freezing storm quite early in the fall. We had a large, blazing fire of logs, and it roared and crackled in the chimney. We were at supper, but we heard a strange noise like someone crying. And it seemed to come down the chimney. Your great-grandfather went out in the rain with a lantern, and there on the roof was a little Indian boy. He was close to the chimney, trying to keep warm. He had strayed away from the reservation, and had climbed up the logs to the low roof where the chimney was. Your great-grandfather asked him to come down and see how warm the chimney was inside the house. He stayed with me all night, and his father, a big chief, followed his trail and took him home in the morning.'

'Oh, how exciting!' John said.

Then the wind sang again through the bricks of the old chimney.

Whoo-oo-oo, went the wind.

'Is it telling something now?' asked John.

'Oh, it is telling the best story of all now,' Grandfather said.

'Once, when it was fall, and I was seven years old, it was cold, early, and your great-grandfather and I wanted to build a fire in the fireplace. We brought in some pine knots and some hickory logs and laid the fire. Then your great-grandmother said that we must not light the fire. We could not understand why, and she would not tell us why. So we shivered, and wondered why we couldn't light a fire. Then, one morning, when the sun shone and it was warmer, we found out.'

'What was the reason?' John asked.

'Why,' said Grandfather, 'we found an empty swallows' nest lying on top of the wood in the fireplace. Your great-grandmother had a feeling that the swallows who nested in the chimney had not flown away yet; and she was right. When the empty nest blew down we knew that it was safe to light a fire whenever there was another cold night, because the swallows were safe.'

'Oh, I am so glad!' John said.

'And is that all about the old chimney?' he asked, as the wind rushed off to sing in the orchard.

'Oh no,' Grandfather said. 'I could tell you ever so many stories about what happened when that old chimney was new.'

'Oh, goody! And will you, Grandfather?' John asked.

'Of course I will,' Grandfather said.

And that is how the stories in this book began in the very first place.

The Isolation of the Jew.

By the Rev. R. L. Marshall, M.A., LL.D., sometime Assistant Lecturer in History, Queen's College, Galway.

All thinking men are sooner or later struck by the marvellous phenomenon of the Jew. Divorced from territorial ties and scattered over the face of the earth, he still maintains in the midst of the world's peoples a separate and distinct existence; retaining the attributes, racial and cultural, which mark him as a man apart. This survival of nationality without country, of essential separation without segregation, is unique because of its successful persistence for almost two thousand years in the face of powerful factors making for absorption. According to all normal social tendencies the Jew should long since have disappeared, having become merged in the other peoples with whom he came in contact. But in accordance with all similar tendencies the successful maintenance of his separate and distinct isolation should have been impossible at the beginning of his existence as a nation. Accordingly his survival presents a unique historical problem.

1. At a very early stage in his history we can see already existent the spirit of a fierce exclusiveness. A pastoral tribe or tribes once lived the ordinary nomadic life of the Arabian desert. But swept forward in one of those migratory movements, caused by drought or climatic changes affecting pasture conditions, they moved westward; and finally a small confederacy of kindred tribes appears in the southernmost section of the Syrian coast. They called themselves 'Children of Israel,' but were known to their neighbours as 'Hebrews' or 'people from beyond.' And here in a goodly land they gradually exchanged their nomadic life for an agricultural. At this point begins their real history, and at this point also begins their age-long effort to preserve and maintain their isolation. They differ from other Semitic immigrants in that there is implanted in them already the germ of monotheism in Yahweh-worship. And already there is a fierce element of fervour in that worship. It sets them apart from other tribes, and it renders possible their political and military union through an all-embracing bond of religious zeal. They are filled with the pride of an exclusive cult. They feel themselves separate for ever from 'the heathen.' And much of their subsequent history is merely the record of their efforts to keep entire that isolation.

The real history of a people begins for us when from any cause the nomad pastoral life is exchanged for life under conditions which, by making existence more difficult, call forth new activities on the part of man. Life in the former stage is fixed and regulated by most rigid custom. Innovators are suppressed, because the problem of living under pastoral conditions has been satisfactorily solved. There is an equilibrium in the struggle between Nature and Man. Consequently there is no history worthy of the name. A Bedouin tribe may exist for centuries and yet furnish the student with little or nothing to record in the way of human achievement. But when a pastoral tribe is expelled by climatic or other change from its grass lands and compelled to settle in some definite