

and girls who will say what Paul said, 'I am ready to preach the gospel.' What was it that made Paul a missionary? It was a dream he had. One day Paul was at Troas. He did not know what to do, could not see where his work was to be. He went down to the shore to think about it, and sat down on the sand and looked out on the blue Mediterranean. Looking on the shimmering waters in the great heat of the sun, Paul fell asleep. Then in his dream the blue waters of the wide sea came

back; and away on the furthest horizon rose the figure of a man; and through the murmur of the waters came the cry, 'Come over and help us.' And Paul said, 'I am ready to preach the gospel.'

So as we look away beyond the seas and think of the millions of men and women and children who do not know what Christ has brought us, there is a voice crying, 'Come and tell us, teach us, help us.' And those who have the spirit of Paul say, 'I am ready to preach the gospel.'

## The Pilgrim's Progress.

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### The Second Part.

#### Vanity Fair.

THE passage concerning Vanity Fair is treated with more originality than we have had of late. They are housed there with Mnason, borrowed from that passage in Ac 21<sup>16</sup>, 'There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.' The Vanity Fair in which he had his lodging was that Jerusalem to which Paul was so determined to go, against his own safety. The passage and the men are transferred from the New Testament to the *Pilgrim's Progress*, not apparently from the desire to point any new moral, but rather as machinery for quite casual purposes of the narrative. While he lodges them, they discover that there are a few good people in the town of Vanity, just as there have always been saints in the wicked courts of Rome, France, and England. Honest at once desires to meet them, 'But how shall we do to see some of them, for the sight of good men to them that are going on pilgrimage is like the appearing upon the moon and the stars to them that are sailing upon the seas.' So we have Contrite, Holy-man, Love-saint, Dare-not-lie, and Penitent invited to the lodging, an interesting counterpart to the list of the names of the jurymen in that same town. The voices of the good men are to the weary pilgrims a kind of sacrament of encouragement and bene-

diction. The conversation moves from point to point with a certain vivacity and freshness which keeps it interesting. The first point on which we may remark is that suggested by Contrite, who tells us that the Fair is so full of hurry as to make an *item* necessary, as a remembrancer for those that live in the midst of its bustle. Persecution, it seems, has stopped, and religion is counted honourable in some parts of the town. Mr. Lecky is no doubt right when he assures us that persecution may be effective, and has often accomplished its purpose of stamping out the thing it hated. Yet human nature is such that after it has gone a certain length persecution becomes distasteful even to the cruel, and so stops itself. So we are told that after their departure when they came to the place where Faithful had been put to death, 'they made a stand, and thanked Him that had enabled him to bear his cross so well; and the rather because they now found that they had a benefit by such a man's sufferings, as his were.'

The best part of the conversation is Mr. Honest's delightful summary of the vicissitudes of pilgrimage, beginning with the sentence, 'It happeneth to us as it happeneth to wayfaring men.' There is a Christian stoicism and independence of fate and circumstances in that passage, not unworthy to be read with Shakespeare's:

Come what come may,  
Time and the hour survive the roughest day.

or even with Dunbar :

Be merry, man, and tak not sair in mind  
 The wavering of this wretchit warld of sorrow ;  
 To God be humble and to thy friend be kind,  
 And with thy nichtbours gladly lend and borrow ;  
 His chance to-nicht, it may be thine to-morrow ;  
 Be blythe in heart for any adventúre,  
 For oft with wise men it has been said aforrow  
 Without gladness availeth no treasure.

There is a good deal of general talk about pilgrimage, in which Holy-man insists upon courage and an unspotted life as the chief requisites for successful pilgrims, and Dare-not-lie, in a striking passage, describes those who are ill-dressed and careless, 'to the disparagement of their Lord.' Here is John Bunyan's old point of honour. The great motive for seemliness is the same as the motive for Holiness, and indeed for all other virtues, and it raises the ordinary decencies and good manners of life into the same high religious light as that which shines upon the noblest and most heroic virtues. The stay is prolonged, and they get to know many people of the Fair. The further marriages of Samuel and Joseph to two of Mnason's daughters, and the continual labour of Mercy among the poor, together with the coming of little children to the young married couples, more or less conventionalize the allegory. Along with this account of the prolonged stay in Vanity Fair, it is worth while to read Nathaniel Hawthorne's, and that of the pilgrim in Part Three, by way of contrast.

The most novel and curious feature of the whole narrative is the story of a monster that comes out of the woods and feeds upon young children. It is very difficult to tell what Bunyan had in his mind when he wrote this. Doubtless, the suggestion came ultimately out of old romances, such as those of St. George and the Dragon, or Beowulf and the Grendel. There seems to be some hidden meaning in it, which gives it a purpose further than that of breaking the monotony of the tale, for this monster had the habit of carrying off the children of the townsfolk and rearing them as its own, and it was governed by a woman. It has been supposed that some covert reference was made to the Great Plague in 1666, while, on the other hand, the Scarlet Woman might be suggested and the ravages of the Church of Rome upon the younger generation. Perhaps, however, it is simply some evil custom which Bunyan has in mind, such as drunkenness or the vanities of fashionable life, or

the lusts of the flesh. In any case, they did not kill the monster, but were able only to watch for him and continually assault him so that he became wounded and lame, and was unable to work so much havoc. Preaching and agitating and publicity lessen many evils which they cannot end, and this seems to be indicated in a general way here.

So it came to pass that even in Vanity Fair the Christians became popular with all but with some of the baser sort ; and the average citizens, though they 'wanted their taste of things, yet had a reverent esteem and respect for them.' It is, of course, common experience that the philanthropic side of a Christianity is often appreciated where there is no taste whatever for its spiritual aspect, but it says a great deal for John Bunyan that he remembered this and included it in his allegory. An evangelist less in touch with human nature would have been more uncompromising in his condemnation of the world of human life around him, and would have counted it dangerous to admit as much as Bunyan has done of natural virtue to the inhabitants of Vanity Fair. One remembers Thackeray's and Meredith's pictures of the world in their great novels, and the more we experience of life the less absolute becomes our judgment of worldly hearts. Even these citizens are not utterly bad people after all. Beneath all their folly and even cruelty, there are buried feelings of good, which can be and often have been awakened, and their daily life has in it many elements of simple human kindness and virtue which cannot be overlooked in forming a general estimate of things. Even when the pilgrims departed they left behind them in Vanity Fair, saints, as well as sinners.

### The Further Journey.

For a time we are still glancing at the incidents and objects to which we were introduced in Part One. The Mine of Demas has no temptations or allurements for these pilgrims. They are rich enough for their necessities, and their travelling expenses are few, so that the temptation of lucre affects them only with astonishment, qualified by remembrance of the common fact of human nature, that people are generally little moved by the 'harms that others have met with, especially if that thing upon which they look has as an attract-

ing virtue upon the foolish eye.' With that commentary upon By-ends and Lot's Wife, they pass on their way.

The pastoral beauty of the riverside and the meadows leads to one of the most idyllic passages which Bunyan ever wrote, with its description of the children's home, and the man that gathered these lambs with His arm and carried them in His bosom. For human tenderness and exquisiteness of poetic feeling it will be difficult to surpass this great paragraph.

### Doubting Castle.

Readers of Robert Louis Stevenson's essay on the *Pilgrim's Progress* will remember Miss Ennice Bagster's famous little woodcut of the demolition of Doubting Castle, in which we see the great keep split from top to bottom, and tumbling in a most monstrous ruin. This is the next incident to which the pilgrims come, and it is not approached without hesitation. The question is raised, whether it be right to venture upon the ground of Doubting Castle even for the purpose of demolishing it: and Great-heart, with characteristic daring, says that he feels that he has a commandment, and must run the risk. No such commandment, however, has been given to the women, nor to Feeble-mind, nor Ready-to-Halt. They do not involve themselves in this exploit further than to sit upon the road and keep guard there. All are safe, though so near to Doubting Castle. 'They keeping in the road a little child might lead them.' In this ingenious way Bunyan has touched upon a question which is vital in every age, and which is singularly appropriate in our own. Doubts are all around us, and there are some who are afraid to venture upon the ground, or to think about the questions which agitate their times at all.' It is a touch of fine spiritual genius that decides the question in each case as Bunyan does. The questions are there and earnest society always contains a religious clique of believers who stay safely in the road and take no part in the questions which perplex the growing number of their neighbours and their children. Thank God there are always others who feel that they have a commandment, and who are prepared to venture any risk that may befall them in regard to their own faith

if so be that they may rescue some of the persons of despair and the victims of doubt.

The story here becomes a most vivacious battle-piece. Giant Despair is clad in a breastplate of fire, like the Nessus-shirt of Heracles, and comes to meet them in all his formidable and terrifying strength. After a tough battle he is slain, and his wife, Diffidence, also perishes. It is significant that Diffidence is cut down by Honest. She stands for that habit of doubt to which reference has already been frequently made. It is not definite intellectual perplexities that are here intended, but a kind of lethargy and paralysis of faith. A greater champion than Honest is required to cut down Despair, who must be fought with the choicest spiritual and intellectual weapons of the Christian armoury. But the vague habit of unbelief is a thing which needs only honest treatment, for there is dishonesty and intellectual insincerity in entertaining doubts which one does not bring to a focus, and all that is needed in such cases is honesty to face the questions which in their vague uncertainty seems so much more formidable than they really are.

The ghastly picture of the victims of Despair is one which none who reads is likely to forget. How many dead are there!—the suicides and the dead souls of the centuries, whose memory must affect every thinking and compassionate spirit. Some, however, are not dead yet. Despondency almost starved to death, and Much-afraid, his daughter, are still not beyond the reach of salvation; and Bunyan is so glad about that that he lets his own merry human nature go, and gives us a dancing scene which contrasts very curiously with his own early scruples about bell ringing and such sports. Nothing could be more delicious than Christiana and Mercy playing upon the violin and the lute, and Mr. Ready-to-Halt, hand in hand with Despondency's daughter, dancing with his crutch, while the girl answers the music handsomely. Lest, however, any one should presume upon such hilarity, he feels it necessary to close this scene with a warning; and in the rather uncouth rhymes which he writes upon the marble stone, he hints that though Doubting Castle be demolished, and Giant Despair has lost his head, yet sin can rebuild the castle and Giant Despair can come to life again.