

minutes. She was not thinking of that rose on which her eyes rested. She was seeing, as in a dream, the roses of a summer long gone by.

With a sigh she roused herself, and, turning to open a drawer, took from it a little, old-fashioned desk. The desk was locked, and she had to find the key and unlock it. Yet, when opened, it was plain that the desk was never used, nor did it hold anything apparently of much value. Within were only a few old letters, some locks of hair carefully wrapped in tissue paper, and one rather yellow envelope, round which a piece of blue ribbon was tied. It was this last that Hester wanted. Slowly she untied the ribbon, opened the envelope, and drew out—only a withered rose, a dead, brown, unsightly thing, contrasting sadly with the fragrant beauty which Hester had placed in the vase.

Yet Hester pressed the dead rose to her lips. It was dearer to her than any other rose could be. As she kissed it the dead flower seemed to give forth a faint, sweet odour, and that odour, too subtle for another to perceive, had power to make the past live again for her.

Yes, she had her heart-secret, this strong, capable woman. At thirty-four she seemed quite old to her nieces, yet all romance was not dead within her. The sight of this old rose thrilled her heart with a pain which had its element of sweetness. It carried her back into the past. She was a girl again, standing in the old garden, the dear old walled garden of her childhood's home, already vanished from sight, the ground it had occupied being now covered with rows of third-rate suburban houses. It was summer, and the roses were in full bloom. Ernest Marriott was with her. She had long been conscious of his love, conscious of it as a sort of fair, sweet sunshine which filled her life with joy and beauty, without considering what a hopeless love it was. He was poor, and almost friendless, whilst her father held a high position in society, and was a man of great personal pride. He would be but too ready to spurn any insignificant, fortuneless individual who should dare to sue for his daughter's hand. Moreover, Colonel Armitage was in feeble health, needing his only daughter's tenderest devotion and care. Hester could not have set herself in opposition to his will, or have done anything to bring a cloud on his declining days.

So when Ernest Marriott told her that summer evening how he loved her, and that he had determined to go abroad and there work his hardest till he had won such success as would justify him in asking Colonel Armitage to receive him as a son-in-law, Hester had little to say to him. She could not engage herself without her father's consent, but she had failed to hide from her lover the fact that her heart was his. No promises were exchanged, but each had given the other a rose in token of their resolve to be faithful. Ernest had said that when, at length, he saw his way to the accomplishment of his heart's desire he would send her back her rose as a sign that he was coming to her. And so they parted, each with hope, if also with sorrow, at heart.

For two years Hester lived on as before, a loving daughter, studying her father's comfort and happiness in everything, and devoting herself entirely to him, guarding her heart's secret the while, and, if sometimes sad, not unhappy, for hope was strong within her in those days. She heard nothing from Ernest Marriott; but that was not strange, for she could not communicate with him unknown to her father, nor would her lover have asked it of her. She knew that he had gone to Australia, and she was sure that he was living a true, hard-working, worthy life in that far-off land, and with that knowledge she tried to be

satisfied. Then her father's worn-out life had ended after a few days' illness, and shortly after, whilst she was still perplexed as to how she should order her future life, there came the shock of her brother's sudden bereavement and his piteous appeal to her.

We have told how she responded to that appeal. She became the leading spirit of her brother's home, and his stay and comfort in his sorrow. But in the busy days that followed, Ernest Marriott was not forgotten. The thought of him was ever with her, and the hope of their union at some distant day was like a star of joy shedding its brightness on the horizon of her future. His name never passed her lips, for none of those around her had known him, and it would not have been easy to speak to them of him. But the months and the years went on and no tidings of him came. Hester had no fear that her friend's heart would change towards her. A love so true and constant as hers could harbour no doubt. She judged his love by her own, and she knew that that could never change.

But as time went on the long silence was hard to bear. If only she could know where he was! Had he seen the announcement of her father's death which had been in most of the newspapers, or was he far from the haunts of civilisation, in some wild region where no news of the world he had left could reach him? Hester's heart grew sick with longing as she asked herself such questions as these. She used to dream sometimes that Ernest had sent her the rose, but she saw no other like this which he had given her, and which she treasured so fondly for his sake. And so year after year passed on, and no token came till Hester began to fear that he was dead. Many a tear was shed in secret over this thought, yet she bore her trouble bravely, and, however sad at heart, was always outwardly serene. When sorrow pressed sorely she only worked harder, trying to throw her whole soul into the duties she had undertaken for others.

Hester had one strong consolation. She knew that Ernest Marriott was one with her in the Divine life. They acknowledged one Lord and Master, and desired to do His will. And in the keeping of that Holy Friend each was safe, ay, and near in heart, however far apart their lives might lie. The comfort of this thought did not pass away as the years going on deepened almost to conviction her fear that the one she loved had passed from earth; for behind the veil of death he would be still in the keeping of that Divine Friend, and in drawing nearer to the Saviour she would draw nearer to him. Cherishing this thought, Hester slowly grew resigned to the long separation, and ceased to expect anything else. She did not let her sorrow spoil her life. Rather it enriched it, filling her heart with a deeper love and sympathy for others, and making her desirous only of doing a true woman's work in the world. Thus she came to be such a helpful, loving woman that her nieces could speak of her as "an angel," whilst older, less enthusiastic persons sometimes said that Miss Armitage was the sweetest woman they had ever known.

But still there were hours when the old sorrow awoke in her heart. It had been stirred afresh by witnessing the happiness of her eldest niece, lately betrothed to a man whom all her friends deemed worthy of her, and to-night Dora's careless words had brought vividly to mind the bygone days of her early love.

Twelve years ago! Yet as she bent over the withered rose, all the life of that summer night seemed to come back to her. She could hear again the whisper of the leaves as the evening breeze swept through them, and breathe the wafted perfume of the roses.

She could hear the thrilling, tremulous tones of Ernest's deep, manly voice, and feel the close, lingering clasp of his hand. She could see his eyes bent on her, those dark, love-radiant eyes, whose solemn, speaking gaze seemed to arrest all other consciousness.

And yet twelve years had passed since she saw him! Her youth had slipped away from her since then; but her love had not grown old—that was young and fresh and warm as ever. Her heart had ever been faithful to her early love. Others had wooed her during the years that were past, but for all Hester had one answer. To the end of her life she could love no one save Ernest Marriott.

As she thought of him now she took from her bookcase a little manuscript volume, in which she was wont to copy verses or passages met with in books that came home especially to her heart. She turned to a page on which she had copied some verses only a few weeks after Ernest Marriott's departure, verses written by a woman of true genius, who in her brief life must surely have tasted of life's deepest experiences, although she was ever so calm and glad and brave.

FAITHFUL.

"Only that, dear, neither wise nor fair,
Just as commonplace as bread you eat,
Or as water flowing everywhere,
Or the homely grass beneath your feet.
Only faithful! does the want alarm you?
Only faithful! will the world not charm you?"

* * * * *
Faithful, dear, to keep or let you go,
Faithful to give all and nothing take;
Think you I should rave in angry woe,
If by time's fault you should me forsake?
Only be yourself, though mine no longer;
By your being I shall grow the stronger."

Hester's eyes were dimmed by tears as she closed the book. She, too, was faithful; but, oh, if she could only know something about him! She knelt to pray, not for herself alone, but for him whose name had been breathed in her prayer every night since she had known of his love. When she rose from her knees she was calm and strong again, and there was on her face that look of mingled sweetness and sadness which had made Dora liken it to that of an angel.

Yes, she was "only faithful," but a faithful heart is a rare and precious treasure in this world of ours.

(To be continued.)

THE HISTORY OF THE SUNDAY.



SUNDAY is the name of the first day of the week, adopted by the first Christians from the Roman Calendar (*Dies Solis*), Day of the Sun, so called because it was dedicated to the worship of the sun. The Christians reinterpreted the heathen name as implying the Sun of Righteousness, with reference to His "arising" (Mal. iv. 2). It was also called *Dies Panis* (Day of Bread), because it was an early custom to break bread on that day. It is called also the Lord's Day, its sacred observances being especially in His honour. The Apostles themselves introduced the religious observance of Sunday, meeting for Divine service (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2), and the opposition of the Christian Church to Judaism early led to the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath; and in the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians it is presupposed that even the Jews who came over to Christianity adopted the same custom.

In 696 the Lord's Day was reckoned from evening to evening, but in 958 from Saturday noon till light on Monday morning. Isip's "Constitutions" and the Councils of Aix (789), Frejus (791), and Frankfort (794), assign as the cause that vespers are the first office of the morrow. The mediæval tradition was that our Lord was born on Sunday, baptised on Tuesday, and began his fast on Wednesday.

The consecration of Sunday in a special manner to religious employments, and the abstaining from all worldly business, was established by a synodal law (canon 29, Council of Laodicea) with this restriction, that all Christians should abstain from worldly business if they were able. In the religious services of Sunday we note the following: All fasting was prohibited on that day, even in Lent, Tertullian (*De Cor. Mil. c. 3.*) declaring that it was accounted a crime to fast on that day, and other authorities were equally severe in their denunciations. The reason for this observance was that the day was considered one of joyfulness because of our Lord's resurrection. Yet this rule was not so strictly binding, but that when a necessary occasion required, and there was no suspicion of heretical perverseness or contempt, men might fast upon this day (Jerome, *Ep. 28, ad Lucinium Reticum*).

It may here be remarked that another custom was to pray standing on the Lord's Day, in memory of our Lord's resurrection. The great care and concern of the Primitive Christians for the religious observance of Sunday is seen in their ready and constant attendance upon all the offices and solemnities of public worship, and this, too, even in times of persecution; from their studious observance of the vigils, or nocturnal assemblies preceding the Lord's Day; from their attendance, in many places, upon sermons twice a day, and at evening prayers; and from the censures inflicted upon those who violated the laws concerning the religious observance of the day. The celebration of the eucharist was a standing part of Divine service every Lord's Day, and every communicant was expected to partake thereof.

SUNDAY WITH THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

The mode in which the early Christians spent the Lord's Day is thus described by Dr. Jamieson in his "Manners and Trials of the Primitive Christians":—

"Viewing the Lord's Day as a spiritual festivity, a season in which their souls were specially to magnify the Lord and their spirits to rejoice in God their Saviour, they introduced the services of the day with psalmody, which was followed by select portions of the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles, the intervals between which were occupied by the faithful in private devotions. The plan of service, in short, resembled what was followed in that of the vigils, though there were some important differences, which we shall now describe. The men prayed with their heads bare, and the women were veiled, as became the modesty of their sex, both standing—a position deemed the most decent, and suited to their exalted notions of the weekly solemnity—with their eyes lifted up to heaven and their hands extended in the form of a cross, the better to keep them in remembrance of Him whose death had opened up the way of access to the Divine Presence.

"The reading of the Sacred Volume constituted an important and indispensable part of the observance; and effectually to impress it upon the memories of the audience, the lessons were always short and of frequent recurrence. Besides the Scriptures, they were accustomed to read aloud several other books for the edification and interest of the people—such as treatises on the illustration

of their morals by some pastor of eminent reputation and piety, or letters from foreign churches, containing an account of the state and progress of the Gospel. This part of the service—most necessary and valuable at a time when a large proportion of every congregation were unacquainted with letters—was performed at first by the presiding minister, but afterwards devolved on an officer appointed for that object, who, when proceeding to the discharge of his duty, if it related to any part of the history of Jesus, exclaimed aloud to the people, 'Stand up, the Gospels are about to be read,' and then always commenced with 'Thus saith the Lord.' They assumed this attitude, not only from a conviction that it was the most respectful posture in which to listen to the counsel of the King of kings, but with a view to keep alive the attention of the people—an object which in some churches was sought to be gained by the minister stopping in the middle of a Scriptural quotation, and leaving the people to finish it aloud.

"The discourses, founded for the most part on the last portion of Scripture that was read, were short, plain, and extempore exhortations, designed chiefly to stir up the minds of the brethren by way of remembrance, and always prefaced by the salutation, 'Peace be unto you.' As they were very short, sometimes not extending to more than eight or ten minutes' duration, several of them were delivered at a diet, and the preacher was usually the pastor of the place, though he sometimes, at his discretion, invited a stranger, or one of his brethren known to possess the talent of public speaking, to address the assembly. The close of the sermon by himself, which was always the last of the series, was the signal for the public prayers to commence. Previous to this solemn part of the service, however, a crier commanded infidels of any description that might be present to withdraw, and the doors being closed and guarded, the pastor proceeded to pronounce a prayer, the burden of which was made to bear a special reference to the circumstances of the various classes who, in the Primitive Church, were not admitted to a full participation in the privileges of the faithful. First of all he prayed in the name of the whole company of believers, for the catechumens—young persons or recent converts from heathenism, who were passing through a preparatory course of instruction in the doctrines and duties of Christianity—that their understandings might be enlightened, their hearts receive the truth in the love of it, and that they might be led to cultivate those holy habits of heart and life by which they might adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. Next, he prayed for the penitents who were undergoing the discipline of the Church, that they might receive deep and permanent impressions of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they might be filled with godly sorrow, and might have grace during the appointed time of their probation, to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. In like manner he made appropriate supplications for other descriptions of persons, each of whom left the church when the class to which he belonged had been commended to the God of all grace; and then the brethren, reduced by the successive departures to an approved company of the faithful, proceeded to the holy service of communion."

Those who neglected ordinances were severely censured. Absence from church for three consecutive Sundays was to be visited by excommunication. Irregularities during attendance, such as refusing to join in prayers or receive the communion, or leaving church during sermon, were strongly condemned. In later times severe measures were employed to secure Sabbath observance, which could

only in many cases induce hypocrisy, or mere external attendance at church. The Kirk-Sessions in 1574 appointed "searchers," or "captors," to make the round of the parish, and take note of such as were "vaging abroad." The strange practice lasted for nigh a century and a half. Some of the records of the period are curious.

As soon as the Christian religion came to be recognised by the State, laws were enacted for the observance of Sunday. The Emperor Constantine made the first law (A.D. 321) to exempt the day from being juridical, as were the others. By this law and others he suspended all actions and proceedings of the law on this day, whether arrests, pleadings, executions, sentences of judges, executions, excepting only such as were of absolute necessity or of eminent charity, as the manumission of slaves, the appointing of curators and guardians to orphans, and causes relating to matters of preservation and damage, legacies and trusts, exhibiting of wills, and all cases where great damage might be suffered either by delay or by death. Valentinian prohibited all arrests of men for debt, whether public or private, on this day; and Valentinian, junior, with Theodosius the Great, appointed all Sundays in the year to be days of vacation from all business of the law whatsoever. In like manner, all secular business or servile employments were forbidden, except only such as men were called to by necessity or some great charity, such as harvesting. By a law of Honorius, the judges were enjoined to visit the prisons every Sunday, to examine the prisoners, and ascertain from them whether the keepers of the prison denied them any office of humanity, and also to give orders that the prisoners, under proper guard, should be allowed to leave the prisons to bathe themselves. Later laws forbade all husbandry on the Lord's Day, allowing only such work as was necessary to secure food absolutely required. The Christian laws took care to secure the honours and dignity of the Lord's Day by forbidding public games, shows, or ludicrous recreations, and the Church was no less careful to guard the service of this day from the encroachment of all vain pastimes and needless recreations. The Fourth Council of Carthage made a decree excommunicating any person who should forsake the services of the Church to attend a public show.

In England Sunday laws were of early date. The code of Ina, King of the West Saxons (about 693), punished servile work by fine. Alfred the Great (876) forbade work, traffic, and legal proceedings; while the statute 27 Henry IV., c. 5, enacts that all fairs and markets on Sundays, except in harvest, shall cease on pain of forfeiture of goods. The statute 5 and 6 Edward VI., c. 3, makes Sundays, with Christmas and Easter, holy days, but permits work in harvest and in cases of necessity. The statute 1 Elizabeth, c. 2, punishes by fine persons absenting themselves from church without excuse. James I., in 1618, issued his "Book of Sports" (q. v.), in which he declared certain games, sports, etc., lawful on Sundays after Divine service. This book was reissued by Charles I. in 1638. The statute 29 Charles II., c. 7, enacted "that no tradesman, artificer, workman, labourer, or other person whatsoever, shall do or exercise any worldly labour, business, or work of their ordinary callings upon the Lord's Day, or any part of thereof (works of necessity and charity only excepted)"; and "that no person or persons whatsoever shall publicly cry, show forth, or expose to sale any wares, merchandise, fruit, herbs, goods, or chattels whatsoever upon the Lord's Day, or any part thereof." This, somewhat modified by subsequent laws, is the present Sunday law of England, and is the foundation of the laws on the subject in the United States.