

THE OLIVE LEAF

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The Debutantes.

A STAGE is a platform for little folks' fright ;
 They falter as soon as they come into sight
 Of the audience in front, be it little or big.
 Go ahead, little people, go on, do not fear,
 The audience is waiting for you to appear,
 And ready to greet you with mirth and with cheer.

Go ahead, go ahead, without caring a fig.

The grown-ups called nations are ready to fight,
 On slightest occasion to summon their might,
 Because all afraid of each other.

Without ever waiting for special-hung stage,
 They work themselves up in a kind of a rage,
 And draw up their armies their battles to wage,
 Still hoping for nothing but pother.

w. o. c.

"By the Horns."

"NEVER take a bull by the horns, young man,"
 advises an interesting writer in his own quaint way,
 "but take him by the tail, and then you can let
 him go when you want to."

This wise counsel is quite as applicable to other animals of the horned kind as it is to the bull, as the following incident, which took place in a northern county, clearly proves:—

A stranger, evidently good-natured, and possibly a professor of some sort, if spectacles, serious looks, and occasional abstractedness of mind go for anything, had come into a little town on some kind of business or pleasure. He seemed anything but pleased with the conduct of the younger portion of the inhabitants, for, as he passed by, and saw them at their play, he thought they manifested a want of feeling for the lower animals. This was made clear to his mind when he saw some of the lads, as he fancied, teasing a billy-goat. They were not really teasing the animal, but were letting it play with them, and the play certainly was of a rough-and-tumble kind.

However, it looked harmful, and that was enough for the kind-hearted visitor. So in his zeal he drove the youngsters away. As they scampered off, billy, seeing no one but the stranger within reach of his horns, made a characteristic charge at him. It was a base return for kindness given, but those coloured glasses were irresistible, so billy went for them. There was not much time to reason why. His goatship seemed to have no hesitation whatever in attacking his benefactor. This attack the stranger could not very well allow, with any chance of safety to himself. So he dropped his walking-stick and grasped the ungrateful billy by the horns. The goat then began to rear up, and being nearly as tall as the stranger when he (billy, not the stranger) stood on his hind legs, the animal had to be pulled down again. In this up-and-down work the visitor took no delight. But the boys did. It appeared to them an interesting game of see-saw. Consequently, they gathered round in increased and increasing numbers as the contest became more and more exciting. The boys became excited also.

"Go it, maister!" cried one chorus of young voices in a sort of unison.

"Go it, billy!" cried another, and evidently an opposition chorus.

Then the choruses got mixed for a time, and there was a little lull. The stranger was becoming fagged out. What was rare sport to them was unbearable torture to him. But he could think of no way to obtain freedom from the ungrateful beast. It was worse than a classroom brawl or a college inaugural day, for from those circumstances he could retire during a lull in the storm. He was in perfect perplexity. Like unto one of whom Milton speaks, he was "perplexed and troubled at his bad success." In complete desperation he shouted out to the boys to know what he should do. "Let go and run, thee silly 'un!" shouted one of the smallest of the boys. He took the advice, concluding that it was never too late in life to learn, and because he felt that discretion was indeed the better part of valour in his case. However, he was consoled with the thought that, as his favourite Ovid had said, "if he did not succeed, he at least failed in a glorious undertaking."

The boys resumed their sport with billy. The game was going on when he returned for his discarded walking-stick, and when he saw that the enjoyment was mutual, he determined not to interfere in the future with the play of boys until he had examined more closely into his impressions! Anyway, he was now convinced that things are not always what they seem. Never again, if he could help it, he vowed, would he allow himself to get into such an awkward plight.

Moral: "Take the bull by the horns," take time by the forelock, but don't touch a billy-goat.



The Prince and His Dog.

PRINCE RUPERT, the nephew of our English King, Charles I., had some experience of warfare before he proved himself, for awhile, "the hammer of the Roundheads." His earliest fight-

ing, however, took place on the Continent, and at the close of his first battle he was provided, much against his will, with free board and lodging in the old tower of Lintz for three years. But, short of preventing him from escaping, he was left pretty much to do as he pleased, and being of an ingenious turn he studied chemistry, and tried his hand at numerous inventions. As a lighter amusement he trained a big white dog of rare breed, upon which he bestowed the name of "Boy." After Rupert had regained his freedom, this animal, like Mary's little lamb—which was white, also, you

will remember — was sure to go wherever the Prince went. Thus it became a known figure on battlefields, and the Roundheads didn't like it. Some of them thought it an uncanny spirit, that by its evil power brought Rupert success. Others held that it rather preferred deadly poison to any other dainty. A few wiseacres believed it to be a Lapland woman in the shape of a dog, while another set declared it was either a wizard of the first rank, or else the very devil. But "Boy" was only a dog, and mortal at that, for it was slain while engaged in the congenial work of pinning a Roundhead soldier to the ground

in the great battle of Marston Moor.



In Early Spring.

Do you remember, when you were gathering nuts last Autumn, seeing here and there tiny "tails" on the hazel bushes? You did not take much notice of them at the time. You were too busy looking for nuts. But now, what do you see in February and early March? Not a few tiny "tails," but a great many quite an inch and a-half long. You call them "lamb's tails." Other people have thought them like cats' tails and so called them "catkins," or little cats. These catkins are some of our very early spring flowers. "Flowers," you say. "Oh no, I think not, they are not at all like



"BOY" AND GIRL.

flowers." Perhaps not; scarcely like the poppy or rose, are they? But on each one of these tails there are more than a hundred flowers. So how many thousands of them will there be altogether? But the flowers are so very tiny that you cannot see them easily without a magnifying glass. Within each of them eight little cases hang. They have fine yellow dust inside. Just see what a show of yellow dust there is around the trees! The slightest breath of wind shakes it out of the cases.

But the catkins are not the only flowers on the trees. You must look very closely, or you will miss the others. Do you see many leaf buds up and down? In some places there are small things that look very like leaf-buds, but they have a crimson tuft at the top. It is quite a fine ornament. You will admire a catkin when you pass a hazel tree, but most of you miss the tufted flowers, don't you? And yet they are just the important ones. The "tails" will wither and drop off, but inside the "tufts" are little hazel nuts that will grow and grow, through summer until you (or other boys and girls) strip them off. But the hazel is not the only tree that has catkins on it. It belongs to a great family of trees, all of which have "tail" flowers. You remember the beautiful soft silky palms that you carry home for Palm Sunday? These have catkins. You call them palms, but, of course, you know that they are not really palms. They are off a tree called the goat-willow.

Do you know a tall thin tree that reminds you of the little toy trees you get with your dolls' houses and gardens? It is the poplar. It is so tall that you cannot gather its catkins, but if you look on the ground underneath you will see plenty of them. Don't they remind you of long caterpillars? Sometimes they are black because of the soot flying about in the air.

Other trees with catkins are the chestnut, oak, beech, alder, etc., but their flowers are not like hazel flowers. Watch for them when the time comes.



The Monster.

A LITTLE girl, who lived in the country, had a young brother, who had to pass through a wood, on his way to and from school. None of his companions lived near, so that he was usually alone. It

was winter, and the days were short, and the evenings dark. One day he asked his sister if she would go and meet him. She promised, and being a good girl, who kept her word, when the time came, she set off through the wood; but when she got half way, she saw a terrible monster. She was horribly frightened, and stood still a long time looking at it, her heart going pit-a-pat all the time. Then, seeing it did not move she walked slowly towards it, and when she got up to it she saw that it was—what do you think?—a black stump with some snow on it!

Early one morning a workman was crossing a Yorkshire moor. There was a dense fog, and he could find his way only by the footpath. Presently he saw very dimly before him a huge monster. It towered above him as if it reached up to the very heaven. In a thick fog, you know, all objects look bigger than they are and indistinct, too. On came the tall figure, looking very ghostly, indeed, and very big; then he heard footsteps, and in a minute or so it came right up to him—and he saw it was a man, and Mr. S. his next door neighbour.

What is the Spectre of the Brocken? A book will be presented for the best answer and explanation to readers under fourteen. Send name, address, and age to the Secretary, 47, New Broad Street, London, E.C.

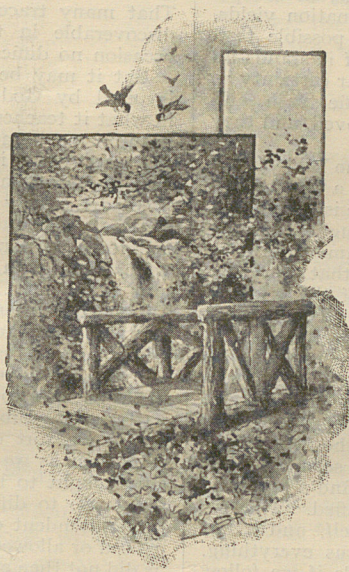


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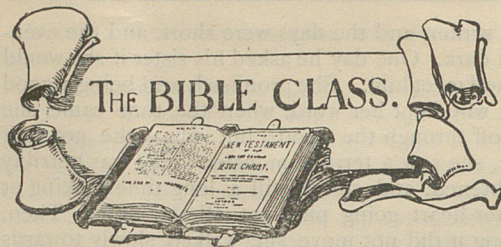
THE beautiful summer is coming,
Its miracle-time has begun;
The May Song all nature is humming,
Its music evoked by the sun;
But only the sound of the cannon,
The widely-flung shriek of the shell,
O'erwaved by the flutter of pennon,
Announces the turmoil of "hell."

The fairy-like sweep of the meadow,
The green waving grace of the lea,
The hillside o'er-flitted by shadow,
The wonderful light on the sea—
All tell of the marvellous presence,
The Goodness transcendent they tell;
But yonder, war startles the pleasure
With murderous echoes of "hell."

W. O. C.



A RURAL SCENE.



INTRODUCTORY.—Continued.

ON opening our Bible to find out what it says about War and Peace, we have agreed to adopt what is called "the scientific method"; that is, we will do as the "scientist" does when he wishes to prove or discover anything. He examines very carefully his facts, then, as the result of his examination, he forms what he calls a "working hypothesis," that is, he accepts the explanation or conclusion his examination yields, and then proceeds to put it to every possible test. If it fails at any point he tries again, if it stands all tests he accepts it as certainty, or as near certainty as he can get. Then it becomes a scientific truth, and men think and act by it, until it is disproved, and they have to begin afresh.

We will begin in the same way with the Bible as the Word of God, and try first of all to find a "formula" to guide us in the inquiry, In what sense is it true that the Bible is God's Word? We were taught, as many still are, that every word in the Bible came from God, and was practically written by Him, so that every one as it stands, even in the translation of the original, is His. The idea was that the Bible was given by some kind of "automatic writing," and then it was also insisted that it was to be read only in a certain way to find its real meaning. Neither theory is borne out by the facts, and they lead to scepticism and error. It is the sure way not to discover what the Bible really says. Our examination will not sustain the "formula," and, if we are wise we shall do as the scientist does, we shall discard our theory, and try to find a better.

Here the matter is very much simplified. There is a better. It is given by the Bible itself, and it has the scientific advantage that it explains everything, even the difficulties that arise in shoals if we follow the old theories. It is this: "MEN SPAKE FROM GOD, BEING MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST" (2 Peter i. 21). There is nothing automatic or mechanical in this; it explains the facts, it accords with experience.

According to this, the Bible is God's Word through man, God's thoughts passing through a human mind, expressing themselves in human speech, blending with human ideas and limited in their expression by human knowledge; in a word, God's facts perceived by a human being and described in his own words. St. Paul, too, speaks of Scripture as "*inspired* of God," that is, breathed into man's mind, or soul, by God (2 Tim. iii. 16); the word in the original is "God-breathed."

In the Bible we find the highest truth, i.e., the actual fact; the facts of the highest things. It might be expressed thus: The Bible contains the highest teaching on the highest things. But because they came through the mind of man they are limited by human knowledge and powers and attainments. The writer could see only what he was able to see and to express what he saw in his own way. The Bible is the product of many minds. It is astonishing that all the Books agree as far as they do and that there is

no actual contradiction between them. The unity is due, undoubtedly, to the overseeing mind that "breathed" into and through them.

It may be said rightly, You are surely aware that the writers of the sacred books—the men who produced these writings—lived several thousand years ago, and at various intervals of time and place. You cannot expect them to write like the men of to-day. Then men thought as they felt and lived. The difference between their writing and ours is due to the difference between *their* thinking and living and *ours*. This is, in general, the point of view from which the Bible should be regarded. To a large extent it reflects the mental, moral, and religious condition of men who lived from two thousand to three thousand and more years ago—men who had little knowledge of natural science, whose ideas about the nature of man were primitive, whose moral development was not advanced, whose general intellectual culture was considerably below our modern standards. That many traces of this state of things should be discoverable in their writings is natural and need occasion no difficulty.

But it may be said: This Bible of ours—is it not inspired by God, must it not be infallibly correct in what it teaches and records on the subjects of God, nature, man, morality, religion? If not, what is the use, what is the meaning of inspiration? To such an objection the reply may be made: A considerable part, nearly the whole of the historical element—at least half of the Bible—expressly and avowedly sets forth the Israelites and their life as they actually were, their own thoughts, feelings, acts, characters and experiences. If so, then the more absolute the Divine superintendence, the more complete the Divine control over the writers, the greater must be the admixture of just such human imperfections, errors, and sins as were likely to characterise the Israelites of from two to three thousand years ago. If the writers of the Bible had been simply Divine amanuenses, or even a sort of instrument on which God played, somewhat as we play on a piano, or use a typewriter, there ought to be a great deal in it of the sort that gives rise to difficulties. Either that, or the Divine Superintendent of these historical portions must have caused or allowed men and women to be depicted such as did not then exist. They would have been creatures of romance; the Bible, so far as it professes to be historical, would be a sort of historical novel. There is no other alternative, even on the most rigid theory of inspiration. The men must be depicted as they were; they must speak *their own* words, utter *their own* ideas, express their own feelings—not Divine words, nor Divine ideas, nor Divine feelings; or not exclusively so. They must act as men of their own time, culture and character naturally would act. And accordingly we must find errors, inconsistencies, mistakes, follies—nay more, things ascribed to God, which God did not do, and could not command or approve.

But as we proceed we shall find the light grows clearer and clearer—a light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. We must then interpret the obscurer vision of the earlier time by the clearer light, taking care to remember always that the historical past must be interpreted by its own surroundings, and that we must not attribute to it the larger knowledge and brighter revelation of the perfect noontide in Jesus Christ, which is all around us, but even yet is most imperfectly seen.