

A SUNDAY IN NAZARETH

CHILDHOOD SURROUNDINGS OF JESUS
DESCRIBED BY WILLIAM ORDWAY PARTRIDGE,
AUTHOR AND SCULPTOR.

Kings have waged warfare, armies lost and won,
Tyrants their battle bolts long years have hurled;
But let the Virgin and her little Son
Still rule the world.—Karlina Trask.

DO YOU ever find a lark's nest hidden among the wheat? If so, you may understand how the quiet and beautiful City of Nazareth nestles down among the hills of Galilee. If Palestine were the country of all the world for the Messiah to come to, then was Nazareth, of all the cities of the ancient civilization, the very one for Him to be born in.

You must cross the Great Plain of Esdraelon, you must go over the shoulder of Gilebo, where Saul fought that last fatal battle, and keep along on the right of the great plain which had been the granary of Palestine for 3000 years before the coming of the Master, and seems to lose none of its fertility when other parts of Galilee and Judah are sterile and their vineyards a matter of history, you come to the little, quiet village of Nazareth, the very first glimpse of the miniature and Christian towers of Nazareth.

A great deal has been written by learned men about the childhood of Christ, its environment, and the City of Nazareth where that boyhood was largely spent. But after the traveler has been upon the spot itself, and has approached it with a feeling of reverence and that strange stirring of the soul that comes when one is in the presence of the hills and valleys which once knew His footsteps, the picture drawn by learned and literary men is inadequate, and must be relegated to the bookshelf and the encyclopedia.

Tillot had the rare privilege of traveling through the Holy Land with a man who possessed not only great intelligence, but who had lived as many years in that land as did the Master himself—Herbert E. Clark, Vice-Consul at Jerusalem. In the last few months the author of this article has had the opportunity of visiting this quiet, unassuming little town of Nazareth, nestled so sweetly among the hills of Galilee, and has seen with his own eyes the places where the Christ Child played and worked and dreamed of that kingdom which was not to be built with hands.

Dreams of the Christ Child.
It is not so much learning that is going to make us understand the childhood of the most wonderful personality that the world has ever known as it is sympathetic appreciation of—perhaps I may call it dreaming over—the spots where those little feet passed so lightly when they were caring for the sheep on the hills above that was then a town of no little consequence or standing, although aside, leaning on his shepherd's staff and looking from the great caravan route far out upon the great Plain of Esdraelon.

In reviewing the pictures of the Christ Child by the great masters one must acknowledge a lack of the reality which the present age demands. Even in the Dresden Madonna, said to be the greatest painting in the world, which has been multiplied a million or more times, there is lacking the touch of the artist who has stood on the place where the boy Christ pushed his plane over the workbench, while his father stood silently regarding the work and measuring the ability of his son to follow him in his chosen craft.

We know very little from history, from written facts, of that life after birth in the hillsides of Bethlehem, of the flight into Egypt, and of the return to the home of the Roman or Greek world. You must watch the little boys at their play along the hillsides, see how gracefully they move in their flowing garments, have them follow your horse, and, with their slings of woven cord, throw stones for you with the accuracy that David had in the use of his little sling of the same order, to understand what that boyhood was like. The East does not change, and in 3000 years, despite the armies that have devastated Palestine, that roadway of the ancient world which was only 150 miles in length and perhaps 30 miles in width, it has remained the same country. The same skies, the same flowers, the sweet May pink that smiled into the face of the Master smiles in your face today, and, above all, Mount Hermon looms beyond, covered with eternal snows, as it was when the Christ Child saw the sun set over it 2000 years ago.

Real Picture Found in Types.

We must take that child out of the hands of the old masters, out of the conventional draperies that have been wrapped about him, and place him in the light, flowing garment that the Arab and Bedouin boy wears today. He must have his hair flowing in the wind or bound about with the cloth of cotton which he may at will draw over his face to protect him from the wind or burning sun. We must look into the blue eyes which one meets occasionally today, and which were not uncommon in the days when Nazareth was a Roman possession. We must abandon the idea of his disputing with the doctors in the temple, and understand that he merely talked as a child might do today in the outer courts, and look upon much that has come down to us in the symbolic way that the Arab looks upon things today.

We find in the marshy places of the Jordan thousands of Bedouins, with their tents of goatskin, who have had their camping ground there from prehistoric times. They have been driven out only to return after the enemy has left their country, or they have been strong enough again to get possession of the land which they felt belonged to them by divine right. One may well speak of the East as unchanging! One lonely minaret, from which at sunset the sheik calls the few Mohammedans who live in this Christian city to prayer, and announces, with his hand at the side of his mouth to carry his

voice over the hills, that there is only one God, and Mohammed is his greatest prophet—one minaret alone tells the traveler and the artist that the little town is now a Mohammedan possession. All about us are signs of the Christian faith. The most interesting spot, perhaps, of any is the small chapel built over the workshop of Joseph on a height which commands the surrounding country to the south and north, and from the threshold of which the Christ Child could see the distant hills of Samaria, where in later life he was to stop and talk with the woman at the well and to impress upon her the fact of his divinity.

The happiest painting of the past years that has been made is, perhaps, that of Hoffman, of the boy Christ disputing with the doctors. But it is not a great work of art, and it is not true to the conditions that existed at that time, nor in costume or guise to the Child it represents. It is in no sense Oriental or Eastern, but is a painting made in the studio of the artist, happy in conception. It appeals to the popular sense because the painter has infused into the face of the child some-thing of the divine life he possessed. But this is an age that demands truth; it is no longer satisfied with flowing draperies and trains of following angels and stage scenery, and I count it a happy thing that the age demands not only truth, but character; it shows that man is coming into closer relationship with the author of all truth—God himself. When we think, for instance, of the child being born in the stable at Bethlehem, the Anglo-Saxon imagination thinks of such a stable as we see here—on the east or west side—apart from the dwelling and surrounded by coarse attendants and by the accessories which go to make up the modern stable. But in the East, and in Italy and other countries today, a large space is enclosed by a wall, with huge gates for an entrance, which are shut at night to keep out marauders and brigands. The divisions between the traveler and his camel or donkey are of a fragile nature.

One can see such a khalan on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, known as the Inn of the Good Samaritan, where, in truth, refreshment is furnished to man and beast. And no doubt the spot that is pointed out in the Church of the Nativity was merely a portion or a part of a khalan, where the traveler rested his horse or donkey, and either ate alongside of his beast or in an adjoining room, that had no door for division, but merely a sustaining column or beam to strengthen the roof. Let us, then, forget our modern idea of a stable, and think of the birthplace of our Lord as quite a natural one for the time and epoch, where any child might have been born except that of a Roman Prince or one of the Roman aristocracy. It might be well to do away with the idea of all that is miraculous in the childhood of the Master, and so bring it closer to our own childhood and our own children.

The poem comes on the berry bush
And the whole street is one masquerade
When Shakespeare passes by.
Every child life is miraculous, if we have the insight to see it. That He was a remarkable child cannot be doubted, and yet we must remember that at the age of 12 in the East a girl is given in marriage, and a boy is often as far developed as a man of 20 in our land. He does not have to contend with the physical sciences; he does not have thrust upon him books and pamphlets without number, to confuse and distract his plain and simple thinking. Christ was educated as were all the children of His time, first by the lovely and lowly Mary, His mother, a beautiful type of the purest and most gentle womanhood, and a type that the Roman Church has used to dignify woman, so that her place has risen from that of a slave or toy to that of a companion and helpmate of man. His father was a man of more than ordinary ability. Tradition, which lives for thousands of years in the East, represents him as a serious, hard-working man, whose interest was largely in his workbench and in developing his children to the best of his ability.

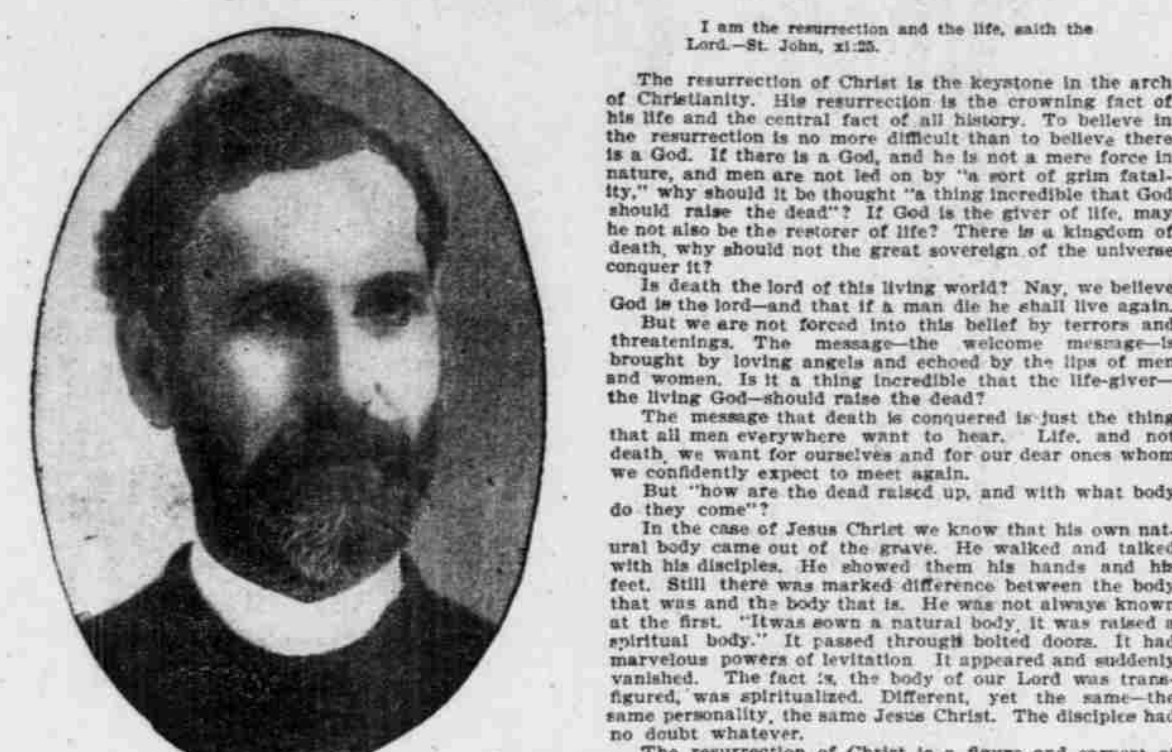
But to return to this simple workshop, where the Christ Child spent many hours of His day, when His brothers were tending the sheep upon the hillsides. He brought his wonderful creative ability to bear upon the simple workmanship which was produced by Joseph, His father. In those days the craft of the carpenter was very different from what it is today. Today He would be called a master workman, for then men cared for the impress of the hand upon the work, and each carpenter could turn out all the details of the house and bring to his work the art and training that were necessary to lift him above the mere Bedouin herdsman or a soldier in the armies of Rome.

There is one picture, executed by Murillo, who never visited the Holy Land, but who, through his creative genius, and that divine idealism which is the artist's birthright, gave to it that wonderful touch which makes it live forever. But the face is not intense or forcible enough. The boys of Nazareth have keen, sharp faces, deep-set eyes, smooth brows, black or blond and reddish hair, and are quick to learn any word that may serve them in the direction of their work. The frequent allusions in the New Testament to the shepherd and his sheep go to prove that the Master was familiar with every detail of the shepherd's life, and one can scarcely understand that unless he climbs over the hills, with their olive trees and sycamores, and here and there a sacred grove, and watches some boy of 10 or 12 call to his sheep, and sees them turn suddenly from their grazing and follow him, or dart in another direction with the precision of the shepherd dogs of the Scotch Highlands. The "sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me," and we know that those little footsteps went in quest frequently of a lost lamb bleating upon the hills which had strayed from His father's flock.

Pope Leo XIII gave to that simple chapel, presided over by the Capuchin

"THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."

BY REV. GEORGE B. VAN WATERS, D. D., RECTOR OF ST. DAVID'S CHURCH.



REV. GEORGE B. VAN WATERS, D. D.

habilitation. Personality will be retained, and in a true sense the body will be adapted to the spiritual world. It will not be subject to fatigue or disease or death. It will not be characterized by malice or wickedness, but by sincerity and truth—that you remember that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Your spiritual body will be adapted to your character. The true Christian character is of the highest importance.

upon the monuments of the Babylonian and Egyptian Kings. At first it meant power—since the days of the crucifixion it has come to mean sacrifice. There, then, is the Christ Child looking intently at the work, and the artist has foreshadowed in a most happy way the Christ that is to be—that is, we see that the head of the father is like the head of the Christ that have come down to us through the ages—not the conventional head, but the traditional head, and the head that one sees now and again on the

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord.—St. John, xi, 25.

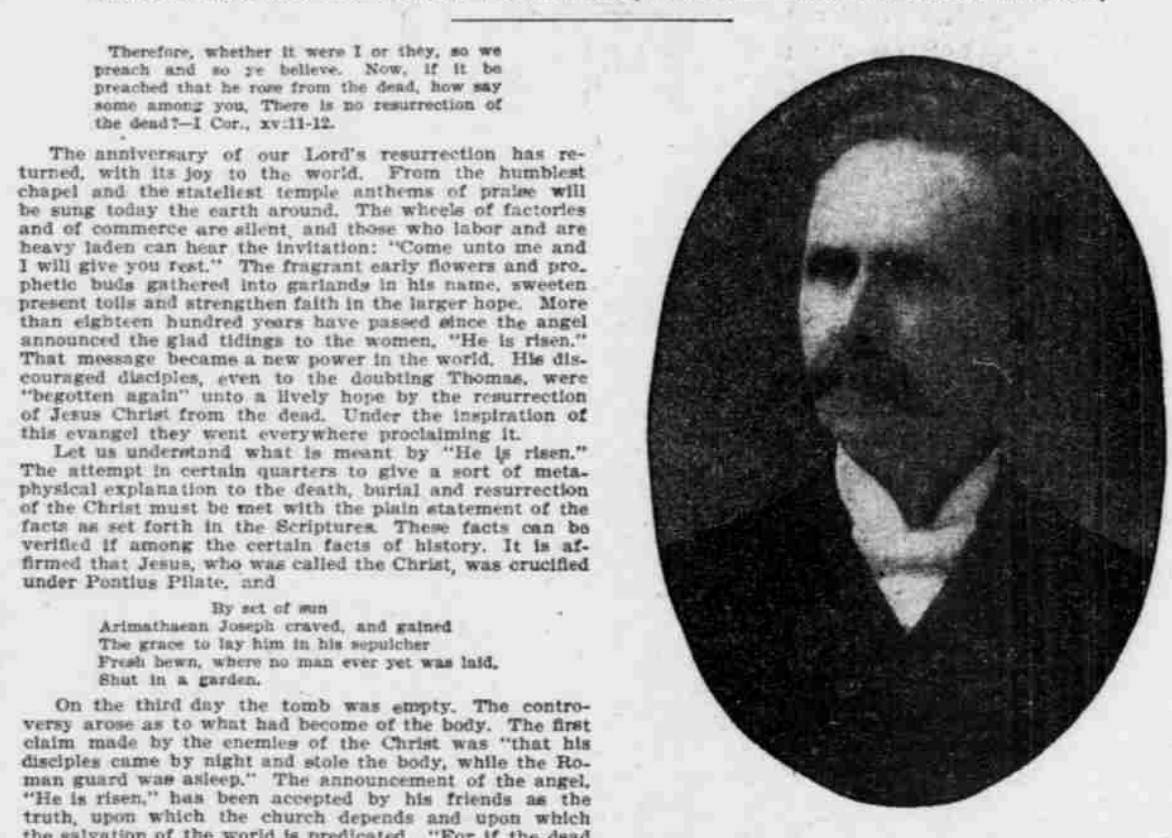
The resurrection of Christ is the keystone in the arch of Christianity. His resurrection is the crowning fact of his life and the central fact of all history. To believe in the resurrection is no more difficult than to believe that there is a God. If there is a God, and he is not a mere force in nature, and men are not led on by "a sort of grim fatalism," why should it be thought "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" If God is the giver of life, may he not also be the restorer of life? There is a kingdom of death, why should not the great sovereign of the universe conquer it?

Is death the lord of this living world? Nay, we believe God is the lord—and that if a man die he shall live again. But we are not forced into this belief by terrors and threatenings. The message—the welcome message—is brought by loving angels and echoed by the lips of men and women. Is it a thing incredible that the life-giver—the living God—should raise the dead?

The message that death is conquered is just the thing that all men everywhere want to hear. Life, and not death, we want for ourselves and for our dear ones whom we constantly expect to meet again. But "how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?"

In the case of Jesus Christ we know that his own natural body came out of the grave. He walked and talked with his disciples. He showed them his hands and his feet. Still there was marked difference between the body that was and the body that is. He was not always known as the first. "It was sown a natural body, it was raised a spiritual body." It passed through bodily doors. It had marvelous powers of levitation. It appeared and suddenly vanished. The fact is, the body of our Lord was transfigured, was spiritualized. Different, yet the same—the same personality, the same Jesus Christ. The disciple had no doubt whatever.

The resurrection of Christ is a figure and earnest of our own resurrection. The material structure of our bodies is constantly changing—yet we know we are retaining our personality. Our resurrection does not necessitate the bringing together of every identical particle of dust for re-creation. The body will be the same, and recognizable, but renovated and improved every way. It will be adapted to the spiritual world. It will not be subject to fatigue or disease or death. It will not be characterized by malice or wickedness, but by sincerity and truth—that you remember that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. Your spiritual body will be adapted to your character. The true Christian character is of the highest importance.

"THE RESURRECTION."
EASTER SERMON BY REV. J. F. GHORMLEY, PASTOR FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

REV. J. F. GHORMLEY.

Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach and so ye believe. Now, if it be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, there is no resurrection of the dead?—I Cor., xv, 12.

The anniversary of our Lord's resurrection has returned, with its joy to the world. From the humblest chapel and the stateliest temple anthems of praise will be sung today the earth around. The wheels of factories and of commerce are silent, and those who labor and are heavy laden can hear the invitation: "Come unto me and I will give you rest." The fragrant early flowers and prophetic buds gathered into garlands in his name, sweeten present toils and strengthen faith in the larger hope. More than eighteen hundred years have passed since the angel announced the glad tidings to the women, "He is risen." That message became a new power in the world. His disciples, even to the doubting Thomas, were "begotten again" unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Under the inspiration of this evangel they went everywhere proclaiming it.

Let us understand what is meant by "He is risen." The attempt in certain quarters to give a sort of metaphysical explanation to the death, burial and resurrection of the Christ must be met with the plain statement of the facts as set forth in the Scriptures. These facts can be verified if among the certain facts of history. It is affirmed that Jesus, who was called the Christ, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

By act of man
Armathean Joseph craved, and gained
The grace to lay him in his sepulcher
Fresh bread, where no man ever yet was laid.
Shut in a grave.

On the third day the tomb was empty. The controversy arose as to what had become of the body. The first claim made by the enemies of the Christ was "that his disciples came by night and stole the body, while the Roman guard was asleep." The announcement of the angel, "He is risen," has been accepted by his friends as the truth, upon which the church depends and upon which the salvation of the world is predicated. "For if the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins." The apostles gave their united testimony to the fact of the bodily resurrection of the Christ. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

On the ground are some doves picking up bits of straw and the wheat that has fallen from the manger close at hand, where the donkey was kept which was necessary for any man who made journeys over the hills to Samaria, or on to Jerusalem, or down to the Great Plain and back again.

The simple-hearted monk permitted me to sit there quietly and study this picture, and seemed surprised that I cared to linger where the average traveler glanced about, consulted his Baedeker and moved on. The artist had come down to Nazareth, had walked over its hills, had watched the children at their play, or following the sheep patiently as they grazed from hillside to hillside. Renan and a few German critics have done their utmost to discredit the historical accuracy of these spots that tradition has held to as the birthplace, the workshop and the place of crucifixion of the Master, but when all is told they only give you their own opinion, or what M. Renan thinks or believes, and, for my part, I prefer, with the men who have loved this life and these holy places, to believe the traditions and the feeling that possesses the poet and the artist as he lingers on these sacred spots. I prefer to believe, indeed, that "poetry is truer than history."

With the Women at the Fountain.

The afternoon is wearing away, the flocks are coming in from the hillside and the mother is waiting to receive her boy at the door of their simple dwelling. Now comes the journey to the fountain. The fountain has been the gathering place from time immemorial at twilight for maiden and mother, where they could pause for a moment after they had drawn the water or were waiting their turn to have their jars filled, and converse with one another about the household and all the interests that make up the simple life of a woman in the East. And we must look upon Mary the Mother in a very simple and natural way. We must talk today with the women at the fountain, who come as did this simple-hearted daughter of Israel, to fill her water jar where women akin in thought and feeling met to talk—for the human heart does not change, even in the East—undergo any transformation, which it has to close to her clings the modest, retiring Child of six or seven, with a serious face, straight features, fine clear brow and pure heart, which make child life indeed like the kingdom of heaven.

When the Master said, "Suffer the little ones to come unto me," he was speaking from his own childhood, when He clung closely and shyly to His mother's flowing garment and listened attentively to all that was said at the fountain, and perhaps shrank from the tramp and gaze of the Roman soldier, splendid in his armor, who treated the Jew as the Roman treated all the people he conquered, with that air of domination and haughtiness natural to a race whose only thought was domination and possession—a race that never produced in its whole history one single native artist, but was satisfied to steal the art of other nations to decorate the splendid porches of Herod or his more gorgeous palace upon the Hill of Zion.

It is not a lovely scene in the twilight, which is followed so quickly in the East by the night and the gathering stars? We scarcely say twilight before it is dusk, and dusk before it is night. We must not look for the Jewish type that we are accustomed to see in the modern world, for the Jew of that period had not yet suffered suddenly to lose the looks of beauty and dignity for which he was renowned throughout the ancient world. One finds the same type at the same fountain today—soft brown eyes nestled under calm brows, with masses of dark hair covered by a headscarf which could be drawn quickly over the face to protect the possessor from the stare of the Roman or the "evil eye," which superstition has brought down to the modern Arab and Bedouin from the days of the Pharaohs.

Of his brothers and sisters we know little, but as the child is father to the man we know what his devotion must have been, because in this day the family ties of the Syrian and the Israeli are never broken. It was this in part that in later life confused the mother and father when he escaped from them in the going up to the gorgeous temple for the sacrifice of the Passover, and when he turns to them and says, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It was harder for them than it would be for us today to understand that love of humanity which was to be the light of the world and which made all men his brothers.

We must understand that the child who tends his sheep or follows his mother to the fountain in the twilight or the other children who were his playmates or companions was a descendant of a noble and kingly race, and that the fact that his father followed a handicraft in no wise took from the dignity of his manhood. The child himself no doubt knew that he was a descendant of the house of David, for in later life he grew into that commanding figure which attracted attention wherever he passed because of the dignity and beauty of his personal appearance—the only thing that carries any weight in the East. So we must look in the child for the dignity and seriousness of one who stands constantly in the sight of the hills and the great plains that stretch away beneath him.

The figure is not unlike the one of Giotto tending his sheep on the hills of Tuscany, and becoming later the friend and companion of the great master poet, Dante. Of course, life became a serious pursuit very early to this child, for the wealth of a household often consisted in its one flock of sheep or goats, and in a way he was responsible for this flock when he went out in the morning on the hills to see that no wolf or prying jackal should seize upon a stray lamb or wandering kid. So the child became fearless—for even today, as you camp in and about Nazareth, you hear the cry of the jackal or the distant call of the hyena; and in those days it must have been no uncommon thing for a lion to venture

across from the land of Bashan and the deserts, that were as impenetrable then as they are today, and seize boldly any one of the sheep or goats that ventured far away from the flock.

Christ the Shepherd Boy.

He was not alone in his wanderings over the hillsides, and when at noon he sat down to eat that portion prepared by the careful mother for her favorite child he had by him one or more boys of his own age, engaged in a like pursuit, and who would call to one another from the hill-tops a note of warning at the approach of danger, or a rallying cry when the afternoon grew late, so that they could return together to the evening meal and the happy play that goes on in the twilight before they go to their early sleep.

One may find towns in Syria after dark, as in Egypt, without a single light burning. It is only the Christian who has introduced the lamp and altar, which is now kept burning in memory of that light which can never die out. What more tranquil home or surroundings could have been found for the growth and development of this serious and quiet-hearted child, who in 30 years was to shake the old faiths on their foundation and even startle the Roman world into a recognition of a kingdom which they could not understand but dimly felt was greater than the power of Rome, than this little town, lying like an eddy among the surrounding hills—unlike Bethlehem of Judea, where towering mountains suddenly start up from the valley where "the shepherds watched their flocks by night," apart from the high roads and the caravan routes that connected Jerusalem with Tyre and Sidon and the cities along the coast of the Mediterranean!

It was not until his 12th year, when a boy is thought to reach his early maturity in the East, that he was allowed to join that happy procession and many colored throng that went up to Jerusalem to pay tribute at the great temple.

"Strongest minds are often those of whom the noisy world hears least." We imagine his feelings when he left that village surrounded and hidden in its gardens and trees, passed through Samaria, down the steep hillsides of Judah, and came in sight of the most splendid city of the eastern world and then stood before the temple, the center and heart of the Hebrew life, the symbol of the national greatness and unity, so often destroyed and yet so marvelously preserved through all the ages. How early revolution took place in the heart of this Christ child and he became conscious of his mission we can only judge from our own hearts and experience, but no doubt at 4 or 5 there came to him those strange day dreams on the hillsides of Galilee which were to become the great eternal facts of his final mission.

It was common for the doctors in the outer courts to dispute the niceties of the Jewish law and the spilt hairs over the Sabbath day and how it should be kept, and the ceremonialists, which to many of them were a mere matter of form. And it is not at all an impossible situation to have this boy put from his eager heart one or two startling questions to a group of doctors with their students, and to puzzle them by a knowledge that he had gleaned from communion with nature and with all the books and doctors that his own village of Nazareth afforded.

His mother knew more about this boy than any one in the world, but it is recorded that "she kept all these sayings in her heart." Through all his life he was identified with the city where he passed his childhood, and the blind beggar by the way breaks through the hum of the multitude with the cry "Jesus, that son of David," because he had been told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.

A Prayer.

I crave, dear Lord,
No boundless luxury,
No gold and gear;
Nor jewels fine,
Nor lands, nor kings,
Nor treasures of anything.
Let but a little hut be mine,
Where at the hearthstone I may hear
The cricket sing,
And have the shine
Of one glad woman's eyes to make,
For my poor sake,
For simple home place divine—
Just the wee cot—the cricket's chirr—
Love, and the smiling face of her.

I pray not that
Great riches, nor
For vast lands, and castle-halls—
Give me to hear the bare footfalls
Of children's feet
An open floor,
New-clothes with machine, or bespread
With but the tiny coverlet
And pillow for the baby's head;
And, pray, they may,
The dew stand open and the day
Send over in a gentle breeze
With fragrance from the locust trees,
And drowsy mood of doves, and blur
Of roachfish, and drone of bees,
With after-hushes of the air
Of intermingling sounds, and then
The good wife and the smile of her,
Filling the silence again—
The cricket's call
And the wee cot,
Dear Lord of all,
Dearly me not.

I pray not that
Men tremble at
My power of grace
And loveliness—
I only pray for simple grace
To look my neighbor in the face
Full honestly from day to day—
Yield me his honey, pain to hold,
And I'll not pray
For gold—
The lashed face, garlanded with mirth,
He hath the single smile on earth—
The sweet brow, diamonded with sweat,
Hath never need for coronet,
And so I reach,
Dear Lord, to thee,
And do beseech
Thou give me
The wee cot, and the cricket's chirr,
Love, and the glad, sweet face of her—
—James Whitcomb Riley.

Light.
The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the body but one;
Yet the light of the whole life dies
When love is done.
—Francis William Bourdillon.