



A. South Land.

“A South Land ”

Judges i. 15

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“ *A South Land.*”—We who live under these sunny skies can see it in imagination as it lay before Achsah that day long ago—one of the slopes facing downwards from the hill country to the desert, meeting the hot winds, looking brown and withered, while the spring green and the flowers clothe the sheltered places around.

It is a true picture of the " field " that our Father has given us in these Mohammedan countries. It was only when we came face to face with it, was it not, that we realized what a terribly parched land it is—how the Sirocco blast of Islam has sucked away all vestige of vitality . . . and then the battle began against a crushing sense of disappointment and discouragement. All around in heathen lands we see signs of spring and we rejoice over them, but when we turn back to our own " field," it looks all the more bare from the contrast, and, the few stunted blades give small promise of a harvest ; so often they have proved to be only a hope deferred that maketh the heart sick !

And it may be that our own souls have felt the scorching breath—nerves get overstrung in these climates in a way they never did before,

and little things bring a ruffle and jar, and cannot be shaken off again ; and a sense of exhaustion comes through the body to the spirit, even apart from the consciousness, so vivid at times, that the very air is full of the powers of darkness ; and the enemy launches his fiery darts in showers on those who come to attack his strongholds. How many of us have gone through the testing of every fibre of our inner life since we left England—and how many of us have known a bitter breaking down under the tests !

“ THOU *hast given me a South Land.*” We have all felt the blessed rest that lies here. But for the sense of a Divine “ call,” I doubt whether many workers in Moslem lands would get through the first three years !

Have we gone a step further and seen the honour that God has put upon

us in giving us the hardest post, in one sense, of His battlefield ? Have we learnt to thank Him for our South Land ? Have we learnt to labour, not for success, but for Christ, and to rejoice if He calls us to lay down our lives in the utmost measure of inward deaths for the sake of these dear souls ?

Raymond Lully wrote these words 600 years ago, and they are true of all Mohammedan work to-day :—

“ I see many knights who cross the sea on their way to the Holy Land, but come back without effecting their purpose. It seems to me that the Holy Land cannot be won in any other way than that whereby Thou, O Lord, Jesus Christ and Thy Holy Apostles won it, by love and prayer, and the shedding of tears and blood.”

Yes, it is lives poured out that these people need—a sowing in tears in a measure that perhaps no heathen land requires ; they need a Calvary before they get their Pentecost. Thanks be unto God for a field like this : in the light of eternity we could ask no higher blessedness than the chance it gives of fellowship with His Son.

But the “ South Land ” is only the half of God’s gift to us—alas for it if we go no further !

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“ Thou hast given me a South Land—give me also springs of water.”

Achsah knew that her father had the springs—the “ fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills ” : she knew she needed them, she asked and received, and her joy was full. Instead of the burning

heat being a drawback now, it was the very means, when the springs were given, of crops more rapid and luxuriant than in any of the more sheltered fields around.

And our hopes mount and mount for our "South Land" as we echo her cry. Our Father, too, has the living springs that would turn our desert into the Garden of the Lord. It is nothing more and nothing less than a Pentecost that these Moslem lands need, and signs that it is drawing near are gathering. Oh, let us join in our faith collectively, as Missionaries, with the rising tide. We can glorify God in so doing, even better than those at home can do, because we are face to face with the desolation. We can look at our barren land with the same reckless, uncalculating *defiant* confidence in which Abraham "considered his own

body now dead " (R.V.) ; and " waxed strong in faith, giving glory to God." Realizing all the hostility, all the indifference, all the impenetrability to the utmost, we will look up to Him with the cry of trust, " Give me also springs of water "—just *because* of the utter dearth.

And it may be that by a Pentecost commensurate with the need, God can get out of these hardest countries a victory beyond any that He has gained yet ; and our " South Land " may yield Him the richest harvest of glory, because our own helplessness to raise any crop at all has been proved to the full !

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" *Give ME.*" It may be here that the work must begin, by each individual worker taking up his or her responsibility to be filled with the

Holy Ghost. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." If that were true of us all, in its fullness, it would not be long before the streams flowed over the withered field.

Is it true of you? "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost?*" May God press in the question till He wrings out the answer—not a vague "I hope so," but "Yes" or "No."

What did the granting of her request mean to Achsah? It meant the right to the full supply of every drop that the springs yielded. And "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ"—what does that mean? Life—life—life—flooding, out from our souls all that is "not of God," all that is carnal and earthly, all that is of self; flooding in even to the "mor-

tal body ” a wonderful “ quickening,” that stills the strained nerves and overwrought brain ; “ endynamiting ” the truths spoken in visits and classes, dispensaries and meetings, till they must mean life or death to the souls who listen, because it is the gospel preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; energizing for a work of intercession that must prevail with God—living out, in a word, the indwelling Christ. This is something of what the “ Springs ” will mean for each Missionary who puts away all hindrance and all unbelief out of the cry “ GIVE ME.” And each fresh God-given spring will prepare His coming triumph in our great “ South Land.”

“ For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty ” (note the sequence), “ and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed,

and My blessing upon thine offspring ; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.”

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He “ gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.” Amen.

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