

Frank Leslie's  
**SUNDAY MAGAZINE.**

T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D., EDITOR.

Vol. XVII.—No. 4.

APRIL, 1885.

\$2.50 PER ANNUM.

**LOVE'S HARVEST.**

By B. L. FARJEON, AUTHOR OF "BLADE OF GRASS," "GOLDEN GRAIN," ETC.



“‘IT IS BESSIE,’ HE SAID.”

THE PROLOGUE—ONE DAY AND ONE NIGHT.

“Come like shadows, so depart.”

CHAPTER I.—MORNING IN COBHAM WOODS.

Twenty-five years ago there passed through Cobham Woods, within the space of one day and one night, many of the persons whose characters will be portrayed in these pages. Some I hope you will grow to love, and as to

others who may not win your hearts, I warn you not to be too hasty to condemn. Unhappily there are souls which, from their first awakening, are overweighted with sins of human inheritance.

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called *Biblias*? Did not Paul himself say: "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men"? If the disciple can be called an "epistle," he can be called a "Bible" with equal propriety.

This is only one instance among many in which modern missions have thrown a new light upon the meaning of the Acts and the Apostolic Epistles, and given incidental proof of the truth of the New Testament narrative.

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### THE ALPINE HORN.

BY THE REV. T. D. WITHERSPOON, D.D.

BREAKFAST was over at the little *auberge* of the Realp. It was an hour or more until time for the arrival of the diligence for the St. Gothard. Mine host, who had just finished his attention to the breakfast of the lazy herd of goats that shared with his guests the privileges of the inn, asked us if we would not like to hear the echoes of the Alpine horn, a privilege to be had by taking a quarter-mile walk and paying a half-franc apiece. A little party was soon made up. The morning was splendid. The air was crisp and bracing. The scenery was transcendently beautiful. Almost before we were aware we came to the appointed place—a sheer precipice in front, the wall of the mountain on each side breaking away in rough irregular masses, faced with perpendicular cliffs, while beyond, through one of the openings between the cliffs, is revealed the more quiet landscape of the Piedmont. In that far distance, like a gleam from some fairy-land, lie crystal lakes, fed by the snows that are dissolving above our heads. Here and there a cataract, with the same unflinching source of supply, leaps down, sometimes with thunderous roar, only the distant murmur of which reaches our ear; sometimes in a soft spray that falls as light as down upon the sward beneath. Toward the entrance of the mountain pass stands an old castle—grim reminder in days of "piping peace" of those sterner times when border chieftains, at war with one another and with all the world, rested securely only behind massive walls, deep moats, and bridges securely drawn.

But while we are enjoying the landscape, in answer to a signal from our host, the hero of the horn has appeared. What an iconoclast all our images of the Alpine horn undergo as we look upon the veritable specimen which this venerable sage of the mountains produces! Our fancy had painted it of delicate proportions and elegant form, gracefully returning upon itself in concentric coils with symmetrical and flowing curve. Instead, we have only a plain, prosy tin horn, some eight feet in length, and perhaps ten inches in diameter at the larger end, without a curve of any kind, except that, just at the larger end, it turns suddenly at right angles for a few inches of its length, so as to display a great yawning mouth.

As the old man seats himself upon the three-legged stool, takes the uncouth instrument in his hands, places the rough mouthpiece to his lips and puffs out his cheeks for a blast, nothing could possibly be more unpoetic, or more utterly defiant of all æsthetic form. And when the blast comes, it is so harsh and dissonant that we instinctively put our hands to our ears. But wait a moment! The rough note is taken up by the nearest cliff and thrown back to us, perceptibly softened, though not yet very musical. Then comes another echo, and another, and another, each softer and mellower than the one preceding. Then come echoes of echoes, intermingling, blending, fainter, sweeter, more attenuated, until at length we hold our breath to listen, as every cliff and crag seems to have caught a note, and a hundred fairy voices are whispering

back to one another. It is beautiful! It is wonderful, and needs to be heard to be appreciated, for words fail to describe it.

When this experiment has been tried several times, and always with increasing pleasure, our artist sounds in quick succession the three notes which make a vocal chord. And now what a wondrous series of transformations! First, the notes come back to us in the order originally given, only mellowed and etherealized by their flights through the air. Then, as the echoes multiply and begin to mingle, the relative order of the notes becomes changed; and as their relation to each other preserve always the harmony, they give the impression of successive snatches of some far-away song, the strains of which grow softer and softer, while the points from which they come seem to be further and further above us, until at length they become to us like angel-voices chanting some celestial chorus in the far empyrean above.

As we turn from the faint sweet echoes to look upon the enchanting landscape again, we say to ourselves, This, of all others, must have been the place where the Poet-Laufreute caught the inspiration of his inimitable "Bugle Song." The lakes, the cataracts, the castle, the mountain summits, all are here. We can readily picture the lover looking upon the scene before us, and saying with admiration:

"The splendor falls on castle walls,  
And snowy summits old in story;  
The long light shakes along the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory."

We enter into the full spirit of the scene as he turns, saying:

"Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying;  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying!"

He seems to speak of the echoes we have just heard, as he cries to his lady-love:

"Oh, hark, oh, hear! how thin and clear  
And thinner, clearer, farther going!  
Oh, sweet and far, from cliff and scar,  
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing  
Blow! let us hear the purple glens replying;  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying!"

We enter with a profounder sympathy than would have been possible before into the exquisite beauty and pathos of the closing verse:

"Oh, love, they die in yon rich sky;  
They faint on hill, or field, or river:  
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow for ever and for ever."

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It was the custom in Babylon, five hundred years before the Christian era, to have annual auctions of the unmarried ladies. In every year, on a certain stated day, each district assembled all its virgins of marriageable age. The most beautiful were put up first, and the man who bid the highest gained possession of her. The second in personal charms followed her, and so on, so that the bidders might gratify themselves with handsome wives according to the length of their purses. There may yet have remained in Babylon some for whom no money was offered, but the provident Babylonians managed that. "When all the comely ones are sold, the crier orders the most deformed to stand up, and, after demanding who will marry her for a small sum, she is adjudged to whoever is satisfied with the least; and in this manner the money raised from the sale of the handsome serves as a portion to those who are either of disagreeable looks, or that have any other imperfection."