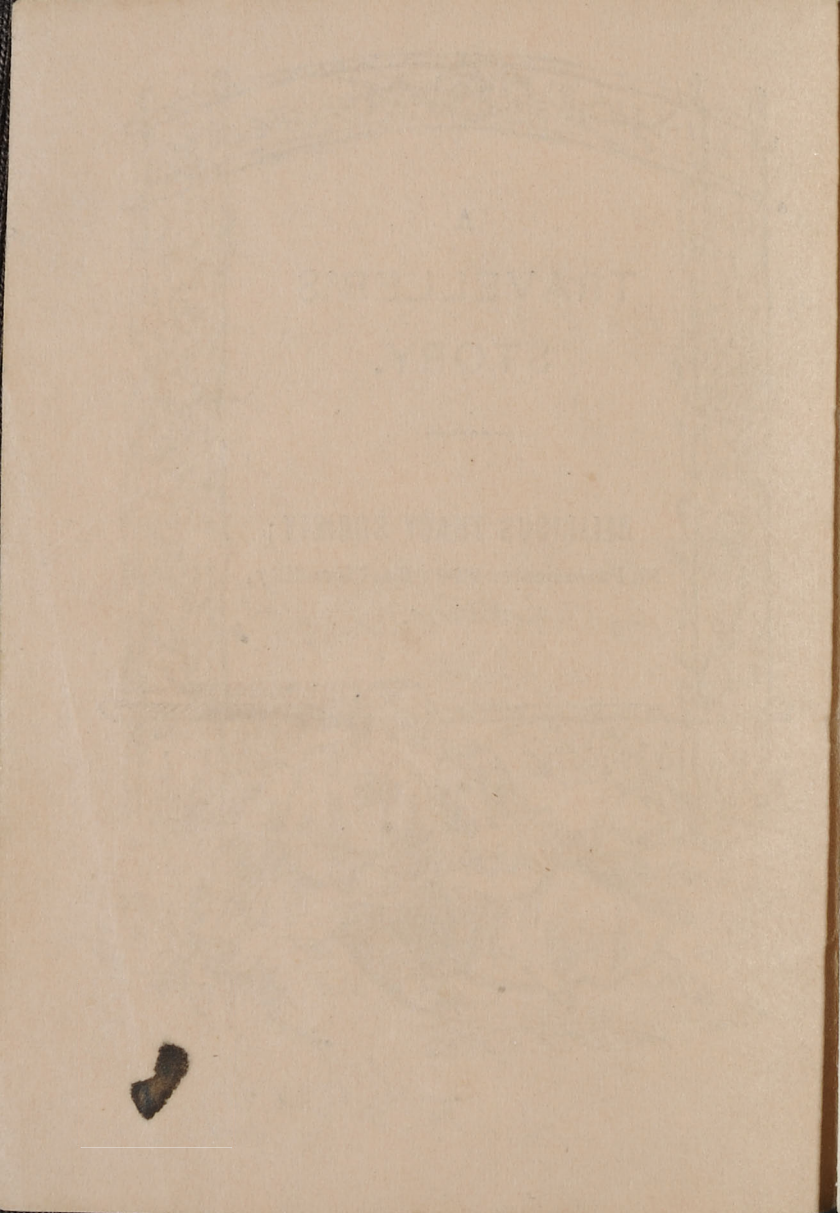


A
TRAVELLER'S
STORY.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
56, Paternoster-row; 164, Piccadilly,
LONDON.



Shelby



A TRAVELLER'S STORY.



“ Now, uncle, you said you would tell us to-night some more about your travels in Eastern countries.”

“So I did, Charles; and as you and your sister Mary seem quite ready to listen to me, I may as well begin at once. But as a story is of no great value unless it teaches a lesson worth learning, I will, while I seek to please you, try also to do you good.

“In our British lands we do not know much about lofty walls around our cities. We go to sleep at night without any fear of being aroused by the alarm that an enemy is at our doors. Let us be thankful for our safe and quiet homes. In some eastern cities it is quite otherwise. High and strong walls inclose the houses for defence, and those who work in the fields, or labour outside at

trades, or are on a journey, have to pass in and out through the gates in the wall.

“It is usual to shut the gates at night, and to open them at daylight. A gun is mostly fired as a signal when the gates are closed and opened. Should there be any persons beyond the walls at the evening signals, they are shut out for the night, and must find a place of rest where they can.

“One day, when going through Egypt, I was in a small boat, sailing slowly down the far-famed river Nile. Sometimes I landed to look at the ruined temples on the side of the river, or to pluck the gay flowers that grew on the high banks. I was well aware that I had to get to the city that

evening, for I was to sail to another country early in the morning. 'I am all in good time,' said I to myself, as I plucked the flowers, or stood looking around me. Now one trifle, and then another, caused delay; and when the boat did move, it was allowed to drift slowly along.

"Soon the golden gleam of the sun was seen on the broad waters, warning me that it would soon set. Still I thought only of my pleasure, or that I could soon make up for lost time. At last the sky began to darken, and I sprang up in the boat as if it had only just entered my mind that I might after all be too late. The hour for shutting the city gates I knew was not far off. The

rowers pulled away at the oars, and as we got near the city, I jumped quickly ashore, I had to get my passports that night, that I might be ready to start by the ship in the morning. In some countries, Charles, no person is allowed to go away without a passport; that is, a permission to leave.

“I ran toward the gate, but, when within a short distance of it, I saw a flash, and then in an instant after the report of the gun was heard on the evening breeze. The hour had come; I was a few minutes too late. The gate was shut. I cast away the flowers I had gathered on my journey. They could not repay me for my delay and loss. The

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ship sailed early next day without me, and I was left behind to blame myself for my folly.

“Such is a traveller's story. Will you listen to me while I tell you there is such a thing as being one minute too late in matters of higher concern. You may be too late for the railway or the steamboat; you may be too late for a party of pleasure, or to receive a bag of money; and you may suffer for your folly: yet another time may come when you may set yourself right again. But, my dear children, do not forget that you may be too late for repentance—to obtain pardon—to enter heaven. You may be not only one moment too late, but for ever too late.

“Your life is like a journey. You may be so taken up with the pleasures that lie in your path, that you may loiter by the way. As I lost my time on the banks of the Nile, while gathering a few flowers, so it may be with you. You may be very busy in pleasing yourself, but what if you should not attend to the great concerns of your soul? It will be sad indeed if you let the days of your youth pass away, while you neglect to give your heart to Jesus. If you should not seek pardon through his precious blood, what will you do in the end? If you should not now ‘strive to enter in at the strait gate,’ and into the ‘narrow way,’ what will you do when you find


that the 'door is shut?' You may think you have plenty of time: so many have thought. But when the shades of death have gathered over them, they have awakened to see their danger,—when it was too late. The right and the best time is *now*. It may be the *only* time.

“There, Charles, I see you and your sister are ready to return home. Yet you must not go till you have read to me the parable of the ten virgins, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.

“And the door was shut!”

“Now stop: those are solemn words; do not forget them.”

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THE air is chill, the rain falls fast,
And dark and wintry is the night ;
Keen is the bleak and stormy blast,
And not a star affords its light.
How can I, then, ungrateful be,
Who have a house to cover me ?

How many poor around me roam,
Not knowing where to lay their head ;
Without a friend, without a home,
Except it be a mud-wall'd shed.
How can I, then, ungrateful be,
Who have a house to cover me ?

How can I, then, while thus I live,
Be discontented with my lot ?
The Lord does countless mercies give,
Yet who so often is forgot ?
Oh may I ever grateful be,
For all the Lord has given to me.

