

—somewhat altered the tone of editorial comment, and slightly alarmed the officials at the Home Office. A reward was offered for information which would lead to the apprehension of a person of unsound mind, who was causing annoyance to the public by predictions of occurrences similar to those which had happened in West Cornwall and East Kent.

Some of the newspapers gave publicity to a letter in answer to the proclamation signed 'The Chief of the Insurrection.' The 'chief' informed the British public that to arrest him would only serve to precipitate the general rebellion of all the animals in the country, as it had been arranged that such rebellion should take place whenever he refrained from issuing directions for a period of seven days, and that it should continue until brought to a close by reasonable concession on the part of the human inhabitants or the extermination of the rebels. He pointed out that he was the sole and only possible mediator between the public and the animals, and, consequently, that it was of more importance to the public than to the animals that his life and liberty should be preserved. He asked what likelihood there was of the apprehension of one who had as protectors and informers the whole animal world. Then he predicted a third outbreak, this time on Deeside, and a fourth, in case of obduracy, in London.

There ensued a remarkable correspondence between the Home Secretary and the Chief of the Insurrection, carried on through the columns of the *Times*. The demands of the Chief astonished the public by their moderation. He stipulated that a minister of justice to animals should be appointed, and offered his services in that capacity,

engaging to instruct his staff in the means of communication with the animals. Further, he required the appointment of an inspector of animals in every rural and urban district, to whom every person who employed or kept animals should apply for a licence, the licence to be revocable if the licence-holder should be guilty of ill-treating the animal or animals under his control, either in person or by deputy. Every inspector was to be a well-qualified veterinary surgeon. A lethal chamber was to be set up in every inspectorate, where alone it should be lawful to destroy the life of any animal other than those slaughtered for food, but the slaughter of such animals to be allowed only under the eye of the inspector, or by persons who had received authorization from him. In every school the pupils were to be instructed in the arguments against a flesh diet and in the duty of justice to animals.

Stag-hunting, fox-hunting, coursing hares or rabbits, pigeon-shooting, and, in short, all sports involving prolonged suffering to animals, were to be prohibited. This last provision excited a good deal of clamour, but the general interest of the public was strong enough to overcome the opposition of the sections of society which took pleasure in so-called sports—'survivals of barbarism,' as they were styled by the Chief of the Insurrection.

All the demands of the insurgent animals were conceded, and the Chief became the first Minister of Justice to Animals under the British Crown, and so ended the cruel old *régime* and began the happy and harmonious understanding between man and beast, which is extending rapidly throughout the civilized world.

The Call of Elisha.

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It is difficult to explain Elijah's movements on leaving Horeb. If 'thence' (1 K 19^{10a}) means 'from Horeb,' we feel that there is something wanting in order to bring the words, 'So he departed thence and found Elisha,' into harmony with the directions which he received (1 K 19^{15, 16}). It is probable that the road he took at first was the direct road from Arabia to Damascus ('the modern Pilgrim Road,' *D.B.* v. 368 and Map), and that he

was pursuing his journey with the intention of anointing Hazael king over Syria. But, while on the way, he appears to have received fresh instructions as to the order in which his three commissions were to be carried into effect. At all events, we find him breaking his journey, in order to cross the Jordan (1 K 19^{19b}, 'he passed over') at some point near to where Abel-meholah lay.

On his crossing the river, a busy, cheerful scene

presented itself to view. On Shaphat's farm twelve ploughs were at work. This was a sign that the country had awakened from its torpor, now that the three years and six months of drought were over. The seasons had returned to their natural course, and the work of agriculture, the staple industry of Palestine, was come to life again. Elisha was taking full advantage of the genial weather. The whole force of the farm had turned out on the occasion, or neighbours, it may be, were lending a hand. (cf. Thomson, *L.B.* 144). We are to understand from the description given (19^{19a}) that the twelve ploughs were going over the same ground one after another, and breaking it up. Elisha's 'being with the twelfth' was as it ought to be: it was the master's seeing to the work in hand being done in a complete manner. We may infer from this that he was very much in earnest in any business that he was called to undertake.

When he 'found Elisha' (cf. Jn 1⁴³), Elijah did not salute him, or come and whisper in his ear the purpose of his visit. He stood still for a moment, and then, without a word, cast his mantle upon him. Thus did the call come to Elisha in the scene of his daily activity, as to the apostles afterwards. And as the outward calling of the fishermen of the lake symbolized their being made 'fishers of men,' so may we see in Elisha's occupation a symbol pointing to the nature of his future work, which was that of the ploughman 'opening and breaking the clods of his ground' (Is 28²⁴; cf. Hos 10¹², Jer 4¹),—the soil of Israel's moral and religious life, to a large extent yet untilled,—and preparing it to receive blessing from God. There is still another analogy. There are some things in the Gospels that suggest that our Lord and His earliest apostles were previously acquainted with each other, and there are some things that suggest this also with reference to Elijah and Elisha. (a) Although the words of the Divine command (19^{16b}) do not prove that Elijah knew Elisha before, it is unlikely that the man designated as his successor was one whom he had never met. (b) The words, he 'passed over unto him' (19^{19b}), imply that Elijah crossed the Jordan to a spot where he knew that he should find Elisha,—possibly, where he had even caught sight of him at work. (c) When Elijah came near, he was at once recognized. (d) Abel-meholah (see Map, *E.B.* 1312) was in the district where 'the spirit and power of Elijah' had been conspicuously mani-

festated. Samaria, Jezreel, Carmel were at no great distance. At the place last-mentioned, Ahab had summoned all Israel to be present (18²⁰). The presumption is that Elisha was there. And if he was there, we may take it for granted that it was not as an unconcerned spectator, or as one who was not sure on which side his sympathies lay. Elijah's audience did not consist altogether of people who 'halted between two opinions.' He must have had many sympathizers in the crowd (cf. 19¹⁸). It is a probable conjecture that Elisha was both one of them, and also an active helper in preparing the sacrifice. A presentiment of his Call may have come to him there. And there Elijah may have seen in the eager, 'blooming' youth one who was well fitted to take an active part in the work of reformation. If so, the Divine command at Horeb confirmed a presentiment that Elijah also had felt.

His 'casting his mantle upon him' had a sacramental meaning. It was Elisha's 'ordination' to the prophetic ministry. When symbolical actions are recorded in Scripture, it occasionally happens that the ideas which they are intended to express are somewhat obscure; but Elijah's action spoke for itself, and required no interpreter. It darted through Elisha with the speed of an arrow that his clothing him with his mantle signified his investing him with his spiritual powers (cf. Kautzsch, *D.B.* v. 655a). He ran after him as he retreated, but it was not for the purpose of handing back the prophet's cloak. Elijah's continuing his journey reminds us of Another Traveller who 'made as though He would have gone further.' Did Elisha know how to detain Elijah, as the two disciples knew how to detain our Lord?

It has often been thought that what he said, on overtaking Elijah, *indicates hesitation*. 'Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.' Is this view correct? And does what Elijah said in return hint disappointment? Did Elisha not reciprocate so cordially as he expected?

The Revisers have left the rendering of Elijah's reply in the A.V. unaltered, and have put no note in the margin. 'Go back again; for what have I done to thee?' This conveys the impression to the reader that Elijah was disappointed. It looks as if he meant, 'You are not the kind of man I took you for.' '*Lék, shüb*'—'Go, return to thy home if thou dost choose; for what have I done to

thee? Do not give it a second thought. Let it be as if it had never happened.' But when the recollection that Elijah was obeying a Divine command in what he did comes in, we must feel it to be most improbable that this was what he meant.

The key to the meaning of a spoken word is often found in the speaker's tone or accent, or even in his look or glance. Gentleness modulates the voice, and softens the sternness of the eye. The tone that Elijah gave to his speech, or the look that accompanied it, may have shown that its intention was not to reprove, but to put in mind and to encourage. We prefer to think that he spoke to Elisha with paternal benignity. He did not address him in the manner of one who felt dubious about him. He saw and assisted his resolve to follow him. The clause which we read in our Bibles as a question should rather be looked at in the light of a *solemn ordination charge*. 'Consider, ponder, what I have done to thee: let it sink into thy mind what a great thing I have done to thee' ('Cogita, ad quantum munus te vocaverim,' Grotius). If this be the meaning of the words, they reveal Elijah's feeling of the seriousness of the occasion, and his earnest wish that Elisha should have the same feeling. 'Go, return, thinking of the noble service to which thou art now bound; go, bearing in thy heart that this is the day on which I have invested thee with the office of a prophet of the Lord.'

The remembrance of his father and his mother struck a tender chord, it is true, in Elisha's breast. The first words he spoke on overtaking Elijah show this. They are the words of a loving son. But they indicate no moral hesitation. Even a St. Paul may 'cast one longing lingering look behind,' and at the same time do justice to the stronger attraction of 'being with Christ.' The thought of the renunciation he had forthwith to make did not shake Elisha's resolution. This is proved by what he next did. He had asked to be permitted to bid adieu to his father and his mother. But it is not recorded that he went back to his house. The short, but decisive, conversation over, 'he

returned from following him' (19^{21a}), or 'turned from behind Elijah,' after whom he had run. But it was not to enter again under his father's roof, but to give the last finish to what remained to be done in order to mark his separation from the world, and his consecration to the prophet's office. We are perhaps intended to gather from the brief statement made (19²¹), that he returned no further than a few yards from the spot where he had stood face to face with Elijah, and received his solemn charge,—only as far as the plough and the oxen; and not to put his hand again to the plough, or to urge his oxen forward, but to celebrate his act of renunciation, and his entrance upon his new vocation, by a solemn sacrificial feast, in which he was joined by the people around him. Thus he laid hold of the plough of which our Lord speaks (Lk 9⁶²). 'Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.'

Such are the signs that Elisha was 'not slothful in the business' he had undertaken, when he took upon himself the 'ordination vow,' 'I will follow thee' (19^{20a}). But it may be asked, Did not Elijah's 'casting his mantle upon him' hold out the prospect of something more than his 'ministering unto him'? The answer is, it did: nevertheless the life upon which he entered was at first the life of ministering service. He did not at once begin to accomplish wonders, or to do mighty works. The spirit which he had received manifested itself in a humbler, but no less effective way. He 'travelled on life's way in cheerful godliness; and yet his heart the lowliest duties on herself did lay.' He was content to be known as the attendant who 'poured water on the hands of Elijah' (2 K 3¹¹). His devoted attachment to Elijah, whom he looked up to as his spiritual father and the defence of Israel, was shown by his refusing to hear of leaving him till he was taken up (2 K 2^{2, 4, 6, 12}). This pious, submissive service was the final proof that it was no hesitating, half-hearted man whom God commanded Elijah to call unto a place in the front rank of the prophetic ministry.