

The typical New England choir was composed of most of the singers of the congregation. They would meet for rehearsals on a Saturday evening in the choir loft. You do not know what music and sociability are if you have never had the opportunity to attend such rehearsals as a participant or onlooker. The minister had given the organist the hymns before the meeting, and the first thing was the fitting of tunes to hymns, for the "Psalmist" only had the hymns. There was a deal of good natured suggestion, as one tune was tried after another. And then came the practicing of the "anthem" with its wonderful fugue movements. Shall you ever forget how triumphantly the voice of Helen Smith, the village belle, sounded out on the soprano solo, and how Uncle Ben's deep bass took up the fugue?

In the choir we remember there were some of the prettiest girls and some of the manliest young men that we have ever seen. There was a quiet undertone of courtship always running through its meetings, and the Sunday after Helen Smith's engagement to Rufus Little was announced the whole choir sang "Shout the glad tidings, triumphantly sing," in a way that made the congregation start. They were not thinking of Pharaoh and Israel, but of the hard time Rufus had to win Helen.

Sometimes it is said that choirs are hard to manage and the nest of all sort of troubles. Perhaps through the mists of thirty years we may idealize somewhat that village choir. But if there were alienations and quarrels they do not stand out in the perspective of memory. What stands out is a picture of the faces of mature men and gracious women, of happy maidens and wholesome lads, who were friends and neighbors, and who loved to join their hearts and voices in the praises of God's house. We are glad that so many of them found their life-companions in that happy association, and that most of the choir who were not Christians sooner or later yielded to the power of the truth.—Watchman.

Mysterious Dealings.

"Really, John, our minister looks just a trifle shabby these days. That silk hat of his is altogether too dingy, and the umbrella he had with him to-day had I don't know how many mends in it."

"Well, my dear, if we had seven children, and two at college, on a salary like his, I think, perhaps, you'd mend mine for me sometimes."

Dr. and Mrs. Winthrop were dressing for a fashionable wedding that afternoon.

"Such a pity it's raining so," said Mrs. Winthrop. "I hope Miss Farnham is not superstitious."

The rain continued to pour on the Winthrop roof, and on the home of the bride that afternoon. The guests were still at the table when a 'phone call came for Dr. Winthrop. It was funny to see what a stealthy air the good, genial old doctor took on as soon as he was alone in the dressing-room.

He shut the door softly, glanced nervously around, then chuckled with the delight of a school-boy, "Coast all clear!" and he began eyeing over a collection of hats.

"Sure enough! Margaret's right. This is rather a shabby structure to cover our pastor's cranium."

Dr. Winthrop examined it a moment, thrust it on his own head, then twirled his moustache with an air of satisfaction before the mirror.

"Perfect fit. We'll swap. I'll get another new one at Kay's to-night, and Rev. Hugh Graham will be none the wiser." So saying, he riddled the name out of his own new and shining hat, and thrust the hat on the peg where the pastor's had been. Then he slunk out of the house with the air of a thief, but a very happy thief, withal.

"Nuisance about that umbrella having my initials on," he said. "But it's no go. Somebody would be sure to recognize it. Then the man would be just goose enough to go home in the rain without any, if I took his. There's no way but to make him a present."

The pastor of First church can't make out yet why he's been the victim of such a nefarious exchange. He's inquiring everywhere for the loser of a fine new silk hat. His wife says it must have been a guest from out of town, but the most diligent inquiry throws no light on the subject.

Dr. Winthrop avoided his pastor for some days after the event, and when finally assailed showed his own fine new silk hat as a sufficient answer in the negative.—Guardian.

Faith.

Securely cabined in the ship below,
Through darkness and through storm I cross the sea,
A pathless wilderness of waves to me.

But yet I do not fear, because I know
That he who guides the good ship o'er that waste
Sees in the stars her shining pathway traced.

Blindfold I walk through life's bewildering maze;
Up flinty steep, through frozen mountain pass,
Through thorn-set barren and through deep morass;

But strong in faith I tread the uneven ways,
And bare my head unshrinking to the blast,
Because my Father's arm is round me cast;

And if the way seems rough, I only clasp
The hand that leads me with a firmer grasp.

—Anna C. Lynch Bolts.

The Young People

EDITOR,

J. W. BROWN.

All communications for this department should be sent to Rev. J. W. Brown, Havelock, N. B., and must be in his hands at least one week before the date of publication.

Daily Bible Readings.

Monday, May 5.—Hebrews 7. Able to save completely (vs. 25) Compare I Cor. 1:21.

Tuesday, May 6.—Hebrews 8. Their sins will I remember no more (vs. 12) Compare Heb. 10:17.

Wednesday, May 7.—Hebrews 9. Having obtained eternal redemption (vs. 12) Compare Heb. 5:8, 9.

Thursday, May 8.—Hebrews 10:1-22. Let us draw near with a true heart (vs. 22) Compare Heb. 7:19.

Friday, May 9.—Hebrews 10:23-39. He is faithful that promised (vs. 23) Compare I Cor. 10:13.

Saturday, May 10.—Hebrews 11:1-16. Faith is assurance of things hoped for (vs. 1) Compare Heb. 3:14.

We have reached the end of our course of study. The value which it has been to us depends upon the vigor and purpose which we have given to it.

In order that our knowledge of the matter presented in the lessons might be tested, it might have been better if the committee having it in charge had arranged a list of questions on the subjects covered by the course. But if this course was to have been acted upon, it should of course have been announced at the beginning of the study. This course has been somewhat experimental. Some important changes may be made for another year.

That the lessons have all been carefully prepared goes without saying. The brethren who have labored in their preparation deserve our sincere gratitude. I move that we give them a vote of thanks! Who will second the motion?

The lessons prepared for April by Rev. C. H. Day, show that the writer has a scholarly head and a cultured heart. They show a carefully discriminating analysis, and a fair setting forth of all the different parts of the subject.

What about the list of subjects included in this course, and the manner of treatment which they have received? Has it been the best which our Unions could have had? We shall be glad to hear from anyone who has convictions on the matter, that we may be guided in our arrangements for another year. The subjects were all carefully and scholarly prepared, but did we choose the right kind of subjects for our young people. These columns are open to an intelligent discussion of this matter.

Prayer Meeting Topic—May 4.

Prayer. Matt. 6:6. Luke 11:1-13.

THE BEST PLACE.

Seek a quiet place far away from human gaze, where the soul can be alone with God. Momentary ejaculatory prayer is possible in the midst of life's jostling crowds on the streets or in the marts of trade or in the fields thronged with laborers; but the daily feast of fat things is reserved for those who steal away from the crowd to be alone for a while with God. There is no need of a closet from which the light of heaven is shut out; better a secret chamber flooded with sunlight by day and illuminated by a lamp in the evening, so that the precious word of God may be spread before the eye of the worshipper. Why may we not build for ourselves in every Christian home a prayer-room as well as a parlor and a dining-room? Would not such a room contribute more than any other in the house to the peace and welfare of the entire family? It might be used for family worship in the morning and again in the evening, and be reserved at all other times for meditation and worship. Then would our home become indeed a Bethel—God's house, with a gate opening heavenward.

THE RIGHT PETITIONS.

We know not what to pray for as we ought. Our Teacher has given us a model on which to frame our petitions, and there is not a selfish request in the Lord's Prayer. Concern for God's glory and the progress of God's kingdom is at the front, followed by petitions for right relations with God. Brothers, if our hearts are full of longings for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of God's kingdom among men, the doing of God's will on earth with heavenly cheerfulness and alacrity and universality, we shall also know how to intercede for ourselves before his throne. We shall ask for daily bread and not for wealth and luxury; for forgiveness, and not for revenge; for safety from the evil one, and not for the gratification of selfish desires. Who of us has ever learned how to pray and what to pray for? Back to Christ! Back to the Model Prayer!

PERSISTENCE.

The Son of the King tells us to be importunate in prayer. "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take

no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." An importunate neighbor can fetch a man out of bed at midnight to perform an act of kindness; how much more will earnest, persevering prayer obtain a blessing from him who has promised to hear us when we ask. We need not fear the King's displeasure; he is only putting us to the test while he waits to bless.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAYER.

The fatherhood of God is our hope. Earthly parents delight to give good gifts to their children, nor do they give that which is useless or harmful. Our Heavenly Father is more willing than they to bestow good gifts on those who ask him. He has already given his only begotten Son to die for us, and he stands ready to give the Holy Spirit to all who wish his gracious presence in their hearts. We pray, and shall keep on praying, because we believe that the world is in the hands of a loving Father willing and able to answer every right petition.—John R. Sampey, in Baptist Union.

The Critic at Church.

Yes, the critic goes to church. In fact, that is the place which furnishes him the choicest opportunity for the exercise of his pernicious habit—for it is a habit and it is pernicious; almost being entitled to a place among the listed vices.

To be able to discriminate between right and wrong in speech, dress, and manners is good, but to use that ability in a censorious spirit, to be ever on the lookout for the slips and mistakes of others, and to be blind to their better qualities, is bad for the critic and bad for those who are affected by his criticisms. Others are affected, for your critic is not content to keep his thoughts to himself. Half his pleasure consists in dropping his remarks into the ears of those who will be likely to give them circulation.

So the critic goes to church. If it is a bright day, some of the ladies—not all of them, nor many of them, but some of them—yield to the temptation to array themselves in costumes that reflect the dainty form and gay colors of nature; and the critic, fixing his eyes on the few bright spots in the congregation, whispers to his neighbor, "Fine weather makes fine birds."

If the soprano attempts a solo of somewhat ambitious flight, even though she succeeds in making a fair rendering of a composition that taxes her powers, the critic remarks to the gentleman in front of him, "Miss Squallini roars so high that she makes all the rest of us sore."

If the new shoes of one of the deacons squeak while he is taking up the collection, the organ playing in the meantime, our critical friend expresses the opinion to those about him that "the deacon seems to be running opposition to the organist."

If the preacher is not up to his usual level of thought and expression, the critic makes mental note of it and says, as he passes toward the door, "Preachers are advised to hide themselves behind the Cross; I should think that our preacher would feel like hiding himself somewhere after such a sermon."

If the sexton, in his hysterical attempts to regulate the temperature of the audience room, brings it up too high and then down too low for comfort, the critic has him marked for a shot, which he lets fly in the vestibule: "If the janitor doesn't manage things better here, he'll soon find himself in a situation where the heat is steady."

Then there are always those who are ready to give currency to flings of the critic, and they are pretty sure to come around to those at whom they are aimed; thus resentments are kindled, and the dead fly in the ointment is very offensive indeed.—Baptist Union.

A youth from the country entered an office in the city where the daily conversation was so foul and profane that it would almost have disgusted the hulk; but a month later not a man in the place dared utter an unchaste word when he was present. It was simply the dignity of manly goodness that quelled conscious iniquity. Character is confession.—Baptist Union.

A poor field negro with a wooden leg hobbled up to the collection table to lay his offering upon it. He took from a pocket a handful of silver, and said, "That's for me, massa;" from another pocket, another handful, "That's for my wife, massa," and from still another pocket, yet another handful, "That's for my child, massa." The pastor remonstrated with him for giving so much. "Oh! massa," said he, "God's work must be done and I may be dead." "God's work must be done," You and I want a part in it. Heaven's treasures will be given us throughout the eternal ages for a brief life of self-denial and self-sacrifice here, out of love for our dear Master. Take this motto to your strong, true, loving heart, fellow-Christian, "God's work must be done, and I will have a part in it."—Ida Q. Moulton.