

THE YOUNG NOVEL-READER.

Charles F.—was a poor orphan boy—When but eleven years old, he was taken by his guardian to a clergyman in a New England village, to be fitted for college. He was a boy of uncommon talents; his manners were winning and gentle, his voice was sweet, his disposition generous; and he early manifested a contempt of danger and a power of endurance rarely to be seen in a child.

But he was a novel-reader. He had read all the Waverley novels, and many of Maryatt's before he was eleven years old, and their effect was apparent. He had no taste for other reading, and no taste for study. The life of an adventurer was the only life he seemed to desire. It was in vain that the clergyman sought to divert his mind into a better channel; and in vain that his wife, with a mother's kindness and affection, labored for his good. He was mild and lovely; but had chosen his path in life, his plans were matured, and nothing could deter him from his purpose. He remained three years, and all the family became greatly attached to him. They loved him for his amiable qualities, and because he was an orphan. Perhaps, too, they loved him more on account of their fears for him.

Alas, those fears were soon realized. One morning he was missing. Hours passed, and he did not return. Days passed, and then they heard of him by the sea-coast; and then, that he had become a sailor.

Many were the lamentations over the poor child who had so early made himself a wanderer and an outcast. His name could not be mentioned without calling forth sighs from the members of the family he had left; and often, in the long winter evenings, as they sat around the cheerful fire, they talked of poor Charles, and wondered upon what part of the wild ocean he was then tossing.

Once they heard from him, that he wished himself back among them; and again, that he had become reckless and bad; his gentle manners had quite forsaken him; he was no longer the thoughtful romantic boy, but was fast growing up to be a bold abandoned man. Novels had accomplished their work.

Five years passed away, and one summer morning, as the family were sitting together in their pleasant parlor, a low and feeble knock was heard. On opening the door, a young man entered, and sunk into the first chair that presented itself. One glance was sufficient to show that he was in the last stage of consumption; the next, and they recognized Charles F.—“My poor boy,” exclaimed the mother, throwing her arms about his neck, and bursting into tears. All wept except the prodigal himself, and he only compressed his lips and became more pale.

At length one said to him, “You can't think how we mourned for you Charles, when you went away.”

“It was the worst day's work I ever did,” was his reply, in a subdued voice.

But Oh, the fearful change that five short years had wrought in him. He had grown prematurely old. Scarcely a trace remained of the once beautiful boy, except in his large dark eyes. His countenance expressed unspeakable woe and despair. He knew that he must soon die, and felt that he was not prepared. “It is too late,” he said. “I have tried in vain to fix my mind on serious things. I have been very wicked—it is too late.” “Oh no,” they answered; “it is never too late while life lasts; the merits of Christ are all-sufficient; cast yourself on him.” He shook his head mournfully, and again replied, “It is too late for me.”

In this state of mind he went to reside with a physician, and once more left his early home never to return. They had put into his hands the “Pastor's Sketches,” referring him particularly to the story of “The Irishman,” and he promised to read it. No more could be done for him now,

except to commend him to God, with whom “all things are possible.”

A few days afterwards, as the family were sitting at dinner and talking about the unhappy boy, the book was returned. A note came with it, from a member of the physician's family with whom he had been placed. He had requested that it might be sent to the clergyman, with his “kind regards.” And he was dead. He had been left alone for a few moments, when he burst a blood vessel, and died suddenly. No one knew to whom his last thoughts were given, or what had become of the undying soul. “He died, and made no sign.”

So sunk into the grave, in his nineteenth year, one who, but for the corrupting influence of bad books, might have lived a long and happy life, an ornament to his country, and a blessing to all around him. And I wish that all who print, circulate, or read such ruinous writings, could but look upon that orphan's grave, and hear his history.—*Am. Mes.*

ACCESS TO GOD.—However early in the morning you seek the gate of access, you find it already open; and however deep the midnight-moment when you find yourself in the sudden arms of death, the winged prayer can bring an instant Saviour. And this wherever you are. It needs not that you ascend some special Pisgah or Moriah. It needs not that you should enter some awful shrine, or pull off your shoes on some holy ground. Could a memento be reared on every spot from which an acceptable prayer has passed away, and on which a prompt answer has come down, we should find *Jehovah shammath*, “the Lord has been here,” inscribed on many a cottage hearth, and many a dungeon floor. We should find it not only in Jerusalem's proud temple and David's cedar galleries, but in the fisherman's cottage by the brink of Genesareth, and in the upper chamber where Pentecost began. And whether it be the field where Isaac went to meditate, on the rocky knoll where Jacob lay down to sleep, or the brook where Israel wrestled, or the den where Daniel gazed on the hungry lions and the lions gazed on him, or the hill-sides where the Man of Sorrows prayed all night, we should still discern the prints of the ladder's feet let down from heaven—the landing-place of mercies, because the starting-point of prayer. And all this whatsoever you are. It needs no saint, no proficient in piety, no adept in eloquent language, no dignity of earthly rank. It needs but a simple Hannah, or a lisping Samuel. It needs but a blind beggar, or a loathsome leper. It needs but a penitent publican, or a dying thief. And it needs no sharp ordeal, no costly passport, no painful expiation, to bring you to the mercy seat; or rather, I should say, it needs the costliest of all: but the blood of the atonement—the Saviour's merit, the name of Jesus, priceless as they are, cost the sinner nothing. They are freely put at his disposal, and instantly and constantly he may use them. This access to God in every place, at every moment, without any price or personal merit, is it not a privilege?—*Rev. James Hamilton.*

HOW IT WORKS.—The essays and tracts on Systematic Benevolence, lately published, having drawn my attention to the word of God, and showed it to be the clear duty of “every one” to give, and give *statedly*, and as God prospers him, I resolved, on the first of January, 1851, to set apart for charitable objects, one-tenth of all I should receive, supporting my family and bearing all other expenses from the remaining nine-tenths. I believe that in the working of the system there is internal evidence that it is from God. I feel somewhat more than before, that all I have is the Lord's. When I am solicited for charity, I have not in each case to adjust the claim with selfishness; but rather, acting as a steward of God, to judge as to the merit of comparative claims.

My account at the end of the year showed exactly the balance I had remaining, which was consecrated to God. There is no difficulty in every man's practising a system adapted to his own circumstances, some giving more and some less than one-tenth; and I believe every one will find, in the conscientious adoption of this system, a blessing to his own soul; while, if universally carried into effect by the people of God, it would, without burdening any, supply all the stores of Christian benevolence.—*Am. Mes.*

DOING NOTHING.—“He made me out a sinner for doing nothing.” This remark fell from the lips of one who was under conviction for sin, and of whom we asked the question, “How were you awakened?” He had heard a sermon from the words, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!” It was a new thought to the poor man, who had been comforting himself with the plea that he had done nothing very bad. But now he saw that his greatest sin was the very thing in which he had been comforting himself—“doing nothing.”

We are reminded of this incident by meeting in an old religious magazine, with the following ingenious interrogations on the words, “Curse ye, Meroz.” The writer says:

By whose authority? The angel of the Lord's. What has Meroz done? Nothing.

What ought Meroz to have done? Come to the help of the Lord.

Could not the Lord do without Meroz? The Lord did do without Meroz.

Did the Lord sustain, then, any loss? No, but Meroz did.

Is Meroz, then, to be cursed? Yes, and that bitterly.

Is it right that a man should be cursed for doing nothing? Yes, when he ought to do something.

Who says so? The angel of the Lord. That servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Luke xii. 47)

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT UNDER AFFLICTION.—We often complain of losses, but the expression is rather improper. Shortly speaking, we can lose nothing, because we have no real property in anything. Our earthly comforts are lent us; and when recalled, we ought to return and resign them with thankfulness to Him who has let them remain so long in our hands. Afflictions are honourable, as they advance our conformity to Jesus our Lord, who was a man of sorrow for our sake.

Methods, if we could go to Heaven without suffering, we should be unwilling to desire it.—Why should we wish to go by any other path than that which He hath consecrated and endeared by His own example. Especially as His people's sufferings are not penal, there is no wrath in them. The cup He puts in their hands, is very different from that which He drank for their sakes; and is only medicinal, to promote their chief good.—*From Newton's “Cardiphonia.”*

Affliction is God's forge, wherein He softens the iron heart. There is no dealing with the iron while it remains in its native coldness and hardness; put it into the fire, make it red hot there, and you may stamp upon it any figure or impression you please.—*From “Case on affliction.”*

God nothing does, nor suffers to be done. But what thou wouldst at thyself, couldst thou but

Through all events of things as well as He.—*Herbert.*

Many a noble enterprise, when almost safe in port, has been shipwrecked by well-meaning willfulness, or through that infirmity of vision which mistakes a house-lamp for a light-house—a denominational crochets for a christian principle.