

Prayer in the Desert.

BY W. MULLER.

The fashion of the thought of the day is to make a good deal of the value of religions outside of Christianity. Mohammedism has had its share of high praise. Its good points have been dwelt upon with a complacency and unction which suggests a deprecatory sentiment towards Christianity, and of the judgment which places the Bible on the same shelf with the Vedas, the Zend Avesta, and the Koran. Undoubtedly Islamism has something to say for itself. It is a step above savage polytheism and the groveling conceptions of fetichism, though whether it is much less blood-thirsty may well be a matter of question.

The spirit of devotion which our picture illustrates is one of the most marked characteristics of Mohammedanism. It meets the traveler everywhere in the East. In the cities, where five times a day the sonorous chant of the muezzins sounds down from the height of its minaret, stopping business in the midst of its midday din; or with striking poetical force breaks the stillness of the night, summoning the faithful to spread his prayer carpet, to wash his hands and face, his ears and feet, and devoutly repeat the appointed portions from the Revealed Book marked out by the Prophet for the faithful. Or perhaps, as here illustrated, are to be seen travelers in the desert, by long-trained habit instinctively aware of the sacred hours, pausing on their way and, with faces turned towards Mecca, performing their orisons, neglecting no rite, however urgent their mission. In the desert, dry dust or sand takes the place of water for the necessary ablutions.

Frequent prostrations mark the progress of the prayers, and the solemnity, the decorum, the unaffected humility, the zeal and all-absorbing devotion which, as a rule, mark these times of Islamic worship have been held up, not unjustly, as an example to other creeds. All this gives us the pictorial and impressive side of a religion that claims the faith of a hundred and fifty-five millions of the human race. But when we seek for its highest achievements in promoting the welfare of mankind after a career of thirteen centuries, the results present as somber and hopeless as the kingdom of Hades. It is destitute of any element of progress, and the horrid tragedy it presents to the world at the close of the Nineteenth Century, of cool, remorseless blood-thirstiness, of blind and sullen fanaticism, without a single redeeming element, writes its final condemnation on the pages of the world's history. Whether the spectacle of the Christian world so long standing impotently by while a whole race of its creed is being exterminated with as fiendish barbarity as ever blackened the records of the past is not an ominous condemnation of its vitality might well be made a serious consideration. Something might be said on the score of a horror of war and the plea of a wide humanity, considering the interests of far larger numbers that might be imperiled by interference. But if the mutual jealousies of the Christian world shall much longer prevent them uniting in a common purpose to shield their brethren, it needs no prophetic foresight to foretell as great a catalysis as ever brought chaos on the Old World.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

Troubled.

Nobody saw me do it,
Nobody came that way,
When I found the box on the closet shelf
Where the cakes for supper lay.
Nobody told me not to,
Nobody knows but myself;
But, O! I wish that cake I took
Was back again on the shelf.
Nobody knows my trouble,
Nobody ever would guess
That a cake would cause a little girl
So much unhappiness.
Nobody can tell mother
Who took it from the shelf—
But I know, before I go to sleep,
I'll have to tell her myself!

Our Fairy.

There's a fairy lives in our house—
Don't you wish you lived there too?
She is always full of comfort
For everyone that's "blue."

She is so sympathetic!
When you almost crack your head
See! she'll bathe it with her sweet cologne;
She'll sing when you're in bed.

If your horrid, dull old jack-knife
Slip, and cuts your hand most off,
She'll bind the wounds with salve and stuff;
(She gives candy for a cough!)

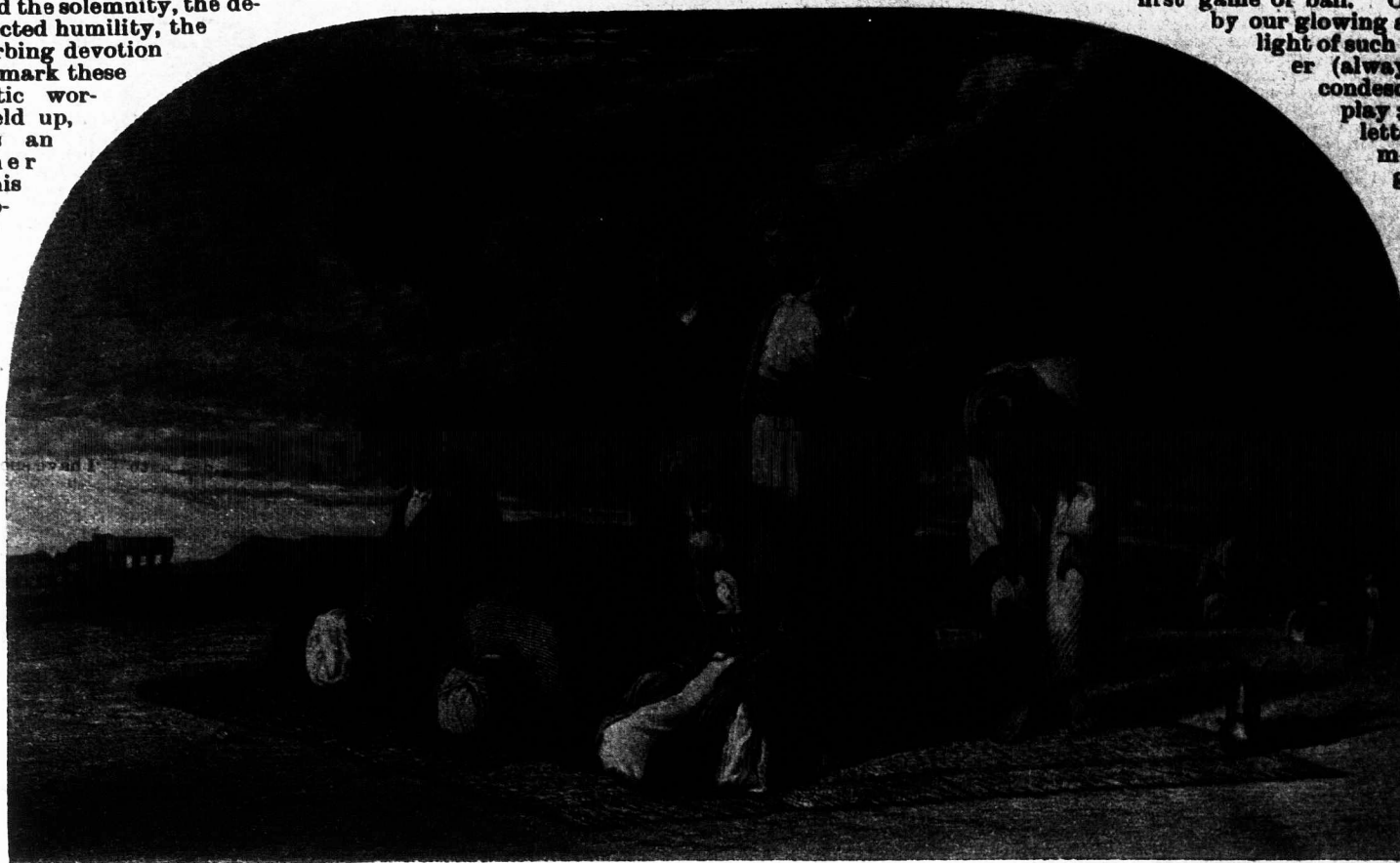
If sometimes you are careless
And tear your bestest clothes,
The fairy's sorry for you;
She finds her thread and sews

The holes up tight and handsome
For anyone can sulk.
This fairy's very pretty,
Though she's very, very old.

Her eyes are bright and snappy,
And she's fond of every game,
Though she wears a pair of spectacles
And "Grandma" is her name.

The Snail's Advice.

It was a pleasant afternoon and the Snail was taking a quiet walk across the garden path with the intention of reaching the wall beyond it. His slender horns moved gracefully from side to side as he stretched his supple neck far out of his shell to enjoy the sun as he went on his journey. Suddenly he found himself snatched from the ground and a finger laid on one of his bright black eyes. Quick as thought, folding his eyes into his horns, and his



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horns into his head, he drew back into the shelter of his shell.

"Snail, snail, put out your horns," sang out the little girl who had seized him, and in whose hands he now lay; but the snail lay close.

"Snail, snail, put out your horns," she sang again, impatiently, but in vain, for never a stir made the snail.

"Nasty, disagreeable, slimy thing! I hate you, and I hate everyone; every single person I know is disagreeable to-day," said the little girl, angrily throwing the snail on the grass.

"Little girl," said the Snail in a gentle voice, which sounded far away inside his shell, "if you were like me you would be happier. I don't mean to be disagreeable."

"Like you! Like a snail! I'd be very sorry."

"I don't mean in appearance, but if you would act as I do when you are vexed it would make you happier. When anyone hurts me, as you did just now, I just shut my eyes into my horns, and curl my horns into my body, and turn my head inside my body, and draw my body into my shell, and don't even look out to see what they are like, or give them another chance of annoying me. Why don't you do that?"

"How could I? I have no horns and no shell, and I couldn't possibly turn my head inside my body."

"I know that; but you have got things that you are always keeping stretched out and that I think must be very like my horns, though you call them 'feelings' and 'pride,' and if you were to draw in your horns when you fancy someone has offended or vexed you, you would be much wiser."

"It is easy for you to talk; you are only a snail. You don't know how horrid the boys are, and mother won't let me do as I like."

"I know more than you think, for I see you here very often, though you don't see me. And I tell you that you wouldn't think people or things half so disagreeable if you didn't keep thinking about what they have said or done to vex you. Just fold up your horns, and even when your brothers try to make you put them out by calling you names, do as I did when you called to me to put out my horns—just don't answer one word, shut up your eyes to everything that vexes you, curl in your horns, and you'll get on ever so much happier."

"I like what you say," sighed the little girl. "Perhaps I'll try. I'm sorry I hurt you."

"Oh, I'm all right again. You see, you might have hurt me much more if I had looked out when you called me."

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—

I have heard that a sure sign of spring is to be able to get close enough to a frog to touch it with a stick, but we need no such warning of the advent of that welcome season, for an infallible indication (the ubiquitous small boy with his marbles) is everywhere in evidence, but especially on the street corners, where "Jack in the bush," "ring law," etc., are the games of the hour.

It recalls the old childhood days when we children, tired of the winter games, would diligently search our playground and the adjoining fields to find a spot of ground where part of old mother earth's white robe had injudiciously melted away a little ahead of time, and how we did enjoy the first game of ball. Occasionally, lured by our glowing accounts of the delight of such pastime, the teacher (always a lady) would condescend to share our play; upon which red-letter occasions we mustered to do our gallantry to all her honor, and were supremely happy. I presume our homely game would be scorned by any of the modern nines, but this I know, it was hearty and pleasant if not scientific. We did not sneeringly dub the girls "new women" when they shared our romps, for we were not a large crowd, and "free for all" was our motto.

Although those youthful joys have long since fled, I often mentally live them over again, and every bare-footed, freckle-

faced country boy with bright eyes peeping mischievously from beneath a half-rimless hat will find a warm corner in my heart for the sake of "saul lang syne."

March! Why, the sturdy maples will soon be adorned with glittering sap buckets, for the sugar-making season is at hand. Old Charlie, decorously moving along from tree to tree with his honeyed burden, and the light-hearted lads and lasses flitting impatiently to and fro, form a pleasing picture.

Apropos of pictures, I will attempt to describe a sunrise I lately witnessed, though no words of mine can give you an idea of a tithe of its beauty. At first as I looked out all around was still, the calm whiteness of the scene unbroken save by the rustic farm fences and the lacy outlines of the trees which grew beside them. Each tree possessed a misty beauty of its own, for during the night a hoar frost had enveloped everything, and the woods looked glorious laden with the aspenlike crystals. A deep gray cloud rested above the horizon, a flush of rose making the intervening space beautiful. Gradually the rosy hues spread and brightened till every fleecy cloudlet near glowed like a fleck of flame; and as I stood drinking in the loveliness of it all the golden sun crept up, and stealing forth the half-sleeping world in gladsome light.

With a half-breathed prayer I turned from the entrancing view to the commonplace everyday duties, but the pleasant memory lingered and brightened each moment of that day. How lavish is the hand that planned such beauties for our earthly eyes, and how much greater must be that beauty which we are told "it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive!"