

The Family.

WHAT OF THAT?

Third! well, what of that! Didst fancy life was spent on beds of ease, fluttering the leaves scattered by the breeze? Come rouse thee! work while it is called to-day! Toward, arise! go forth thy way!

Lonely, and what of that? Some must be lonely! 'tis not given to all To feel a heart responsive rise and fall To blend another life into its own. Work may be done in loneliness: work on!

Dark! well, what of that? Didst fondly dream the sun would never set? Dost fear to lose thy way? Take courage yet! Learn thou to walk by faith and not by light. Thy steps will guide thee and be gilded right.

Hard! well, and what of that? Didst fancy life one summer holiday, With lessons none to learn, and naught but play? Go, get thee to thy task! Conquer or die, It must be learned. Learn it then, patiently.

No help I say, 'tis not so; Though human help be far, thy God is nigh, Who feeds the raven hears his children cry, He's near thee whereso'er thy footsteps roam, And He will guide thee, light thee, help thee home! Every Other Saturday.

A SKETCH IN SOUTHERN MANITOBA

MR. C. W. GORDON, B.A., one of the Knox College Students' Missionary Society's laborers last summer, gives in the Monthly a charming account of his field and his work. A few fragments of the paper will, we are sure, be of deep interest to our readers:

"The people come from almost every part of the world, bringing with them customs, prejudices, beliefs, manners, and a little of the religion of their native lands. They come most of them with one aim, to make money and make it rapidly, and this desire was as a fever in their veins. This, however, has in large measure passed; the terrible boom of '83 and successive failures have taught them that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth, and while they retain their keenness, practicality, energy, and sturdy independence, they have developed the nobler traits of generosity and brotherly kindness; suspicion and jealousy have given place to strong fellowship.

"On the whole they are much like other people, but there are features of character peculiarly their own. They have immense faith in their country, in its soil as superior to any in the world, in the climate as superior at least to that of Ontario, and in the men who live there as being, as they say, 'about as smart as they make 'em.' It was amusing, too, to note the firm conviction each man had that his particular section was the pick of the township.

THE BACHELORS.

"A large proportion of the community are bachelors, and they are the moving power for evil or for good, as they may turn. They are young men of average intellect, but of more than average energy, who, from love of adventure and an ever-present desire to do, have left comfortable, often refined, homes in Ontario and across the sea to enjoy the independence and romance of life in a rancho. Of the first they get their fill, but after three months' house-keeping, when the bread fails to rise, and when, after dinner, they have to wash the dishes, the romance fades, as fades a beautiful dream into a hideous nightmare. And in the long winter nights, as the bachelor sits over his lonely fire, it is a wonder if he see not in it the faces of loved ones left behind, and many a time does his heart go back to the home so far away, and he vows he will write to-morrow—and perhaps he does. The training of their mode of life makes them men, sturdy, self-reliant, patient of discomfort. They are wild, it is true—a kind of serious wildness it is—but those whom I met were singularly free from vice.

"They honoured me with the position of pitcher in their baseball club, and during the summer I think I only heard one man swear on the field, though I was told that their former record in this regard was not unstained. Then their sense of honour and fair play made them feel in a manner bound to attend Bible class and preaching, seeing that one of their club officiated. And they did attend. And if Young People's Associations are of use in church work in Ontario, I believe in baseball clubs for the North-west, for before the summer's work was done, by the grace of God and the working of His Holy Spirit, eight of those who played in that club expressed to me their faith in Jesus Christ, and their determination to serve Him faithfully, and by His grace they shall have a place among those that overcome.

"But others than bachelors live in Manitoba. There are some women, not a great many, yet enough to civilize and preserve the country from ruin; but of that class known as old maids—and I speak the words in reverence, as one has said, and lift my hat and say God bless them—none are to be found, and this I consider one of the serious drawbacks of that country. Over 500 square miles I rode and found not one—the race is extinct. They could not live in that climate—one tried, but so desperate an opposition to this condition of independence did a bachelor raise, that she gloriously and successfully failed to maintain it.

"After a few weeks a Bible class was organized by the young people of Killarney, and a very pleasant part of the summer's work was the teaching of the Bible class every Monday evening at Killarney. About twenty young men and women regularly attended this class, some walking two or three miles, closely attended by the ubiquitous mosquito.

"But by far the most trying part of the work was the visitation of the people in their homes—trying, but very often pleasant. We were generally made welcome—always and heartily by the bachelors. In this work one had need of deep sympathy, but more than all, of earnestness and moral courage. In speaking to the men, it was quite necessary to speak in the most matter-of-fact and business-like manner possible, else, if you began to preach, they would most blantly agree with everything you said.

"Asking a keen, shrewd business man one day if he were a church member, his reply was, 'Well, no, I don't take much stock in that sort of thing.' I told him it was the best thing, and he had better see to it, and left him. Two months after this we had been preaching upon the beautiful words that spoke of rest to the heavy-laden, and he made the

remark, bluntly, yet in a hesitating kind of way: 'Well, I haven't got that rest, and what's more, I'd like to get it.' By-and-by the light came. He found rest, and was a new man, and he carried his Christianity into his business, so that when a sharp deal fell to him he did not take advantage of it, saying he wasn't that kind of a man now.

"On the 13th of September our last service was held. The work was almost done, and we were only beginning to feel how much was left undone. In the growing darkness we spoke of that most wonderful of themes, the love of God. And after all was over, we rode home over the hill, the light almost gone from the west, with the refrain of the last hymn ringing in our hearts, 'Bringing in the sheaves.' We sang it because the children knew it. Surely there are sheaves there—if so, the reapers will find them."

A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

It was a mild but rainy afternoon just at the close of winter, and the children had all day been wearily seeking diversion within doors. Grandma sat in the chimney-corner serenely knitting as usual, while the little ones played their games around her. Janette, the eldest, was just at present ransacking a drawer in which lay many a relic of past days, when she suddenly drew forth a bunch of flowers, so dry and withered as almost to crumble at her touch.

"Oh, grandma, do look!" she cried. "See how old and faded these flowers are; surely they must have a history."

The grandmother had raised her soft eyes, and now as she rested on the withered flowers, a light as of rekindled memories lit up her countenance, and she answered, meditatively:

"Yes, dear, they have indeed a history, true and beautiful. Draw your chairs closer around me, and I will tell it you here by the fireside."

This was invitation enough for the children; in another moment they had gathered about her, all silent and gladly expectant as grandma began.

"Sad trouble and affliction had come to the home of Louis Mayran and his widowed mother, more bitter poverty and need than one could ever have thought possible, a few years before, when looking into their comfortable dwelling in the suburbs of the great city, with its well-tended garden of early vegetables, by which Louis' father earned for them all such a sufficient support.

"But the good father had died, and though the mother and her boy laboured industriously to keep up the business, misfortunes followed fast, one upon another; two successive cold springs had killed the tender vegetables; and little by little they had found themselves deeper in debt, the rent already sadly in arrears, and nothing offering even a promise of better things to come.

"One by one, every article that could be spared found its way to the pawn-shops, till now the little cottage was well-nigh emptied of comforts, and the gaunt shadow of starvation seemed nearing their door, while friendly faces or helping hands became ever fewer and more distant. For a time the poor widow had borne up bravely; but what with sleepless nights and insufficient food, she was fast sinking under her burdens; and she would have greatly deplored had it not been for her boy, who tried so hard to be her stay and comfort.

"Cheer up, mother," he would say when tears no longer to be hidden stole down her cheek. "I am growing older and stronger now, each day, and surely I will soon find work, when you shall want for nothing. I will bear anything if only we are not compelled to ask help of others, and surely God, who provides for His birds and flowers, will not let His children suffer."

"It was easier, perhaps, for Louis thus to maintain a steady faith and undaunted courage, for all unknown to him the self-sacrificing mother was denying herself by far the larger share of the scant daily food, that he might not want. But the manly boy had not only this trust in the love of a Heavenly Father, but also the pride of old French blood, which helped him in the struggle with adversity.

"Like many another, however, Louis was to learn that God very often sends His gifts through earthly agents. The widow and her boy were not forced to appeal to strangers for help, but the story of their need was brought to the knowledge of one of God's own ministering spirits, a kind and wealthy lady who well knew how to relieve necessity without causing pain or humiliation.

"It was thus that this unknown friend entered the desolate cottage one day, just as the severe winter was giving place to promises of spring, and just when even Louis' brave heart was drooping sorely. Sad and silent he stood behind his mother's chair listening gratefully, but with a throbbing heart, as the kind visitor talked gently of their sorrows, her little girl who had accompanied her looking often into his sad eyes.

"Louis strove hard to thrust down the feeling of wounded pride struggling in him, but when he saw the lady draw forth her purse, though not ungrateful, yet he could no longer conceal his pain, and abruptly leaving the room, sought despondingly the cold air without. If he only had anything with which to make return. Were they indeed, then, so poor that they must receive money as beggars, unable even to manifest their gratitude save in words which seemed to find no way to his lips?

"Surely this was hard, and the poor boy lifted his tearful eyes almost reproachfully to Heaven; but the bright sun dazzled them, as if in rebuke, and as they dropped, something at his very feet attracted suddenly his attention. There, amid fresh springing grass, and last year's leaves, peeped out a bed of rare sweet violets, lifting their blue eyes heavenward and offering their silent incense of love.

"Such violets truly were not seen every day, for the father had brought them from a distant land, and so carefully tended them that they bloomed in rare beauty and fragrance. To Louis they seemed like a message direct from God in this moment of bitterness and pain, and with a sudden glad thought he stooped and gathered quickly a handful of the sweet, fresh blossoms.

"It was but a moment's work, and as the lady and her little girl emerged from the door-way he slipped his gift into the hand of the latter, and she looked up at him with a smile of such glad surprise he could but feel that in her eyes, at least, it was no mean return for the gold just given; moreover, the lady also thanked him so graciously that none could have doubted the sincerity of her pleasure, and with a lighter heart the grateful boy returned to his mother.

"This was the beginning of brighter days. Another home was found for the widow and her son, where both could more easily obtain work, and

prosperity seemed to flow in upon them even as misfortunes had lately done. Distance, and the relief from need alike, suspended the acquaintance formed with the generous lady under such sad circumstances, but neither Louis nor the mother ever forgot the helping hand that had thus been outstretched to them; daily they asked God's blessing on the mother and child whom He had sent to their aid, and in Louis' heart lingered ever the longing to be permitted to recompense their goodness.

"Ten years had passed away, and in ten long years many and great changes can arise, both sad and happy. In these years Louis had become a prosperous young merchant, while to the home of the lady, once so wealthy, sorrow and reverses had found their way.

"Mysterious truly are the ways of God, who tries the faith of His children, one by one, through just such experiences as seem best to Him. She who had helped so many with her earthly gifts, now lay on a bed of sickness, while through sudden misfortune these worldly possessions were slipping from her, and the young girl at her side drooped under the weight of pain and care.

"At last a day came full of bitter woe. The fair home must be given up to impatient creditors, and all its household treasures sold to the highest bidder. The unhappy mother was unable to leave her room, and the young daughter beheld, with unutterable sorrow, articles endeared from infancy pass into the hands of strangers.

"A beautiful desk, at which she had penned her letters, alone remained to be disposed of; but just as the auctioneer began to call it out a sudden recollection seemed to flash across the poor girl's mind, and thrusting her hand with a swift impulse into one of the small drawers, she was removing some treasure when the salesman stopped her.

"I am sorry, my young lady," said he respectfully but coldly, "but I cannot allow you to withhold any valuables from the sale; everything must be included," and extending his hand, the girl, with a choking sob, dropped into it—only a withered bunch of violets!

"Ah!" he said with a glance of surprise, but little compassion; and more to reassure the crowd than with any other motive, he held up the dead flowers, crying: "A souvenir! Who bids?"

"There was a moment's silence, and then a strong, manly voice responded: 'Five hundred francs!'

"The words passed like an electric shock through the assembly, and all eyes turned in curious quest upon a young man who, with flushed cheeks and countenance full of compassion, had just entered the room.

"Are you really in earnest, Monsieur?" asked the auctioneer.

"I am," was the answer, and no one disputing the sale, the withered violets were at once handed down to the purchaser.

"The sale was now quickly ended and the crowd dispersed, but the young stranger remained.

"Need I tell you his name, children," continued grandma after a pause. "But here he comes to speak for himself," and, looking up, the little group around the fireside saw grandma just entering with a smiling face, and well they knew that he was Louis Mayran, and the young girl of whom they had heard was sitting there before them, her snowy cap resting on her soft white hair.—New York Observer.

SHORTER CATECHISM COMPETITION.

SOMETIME ago we referred to the revival of interest in the Shorter Catechism in the Presbyterian Church in England. The returns of the first examination have just come to hand, and are most encouraging. We have run through them and give some interesting totals.

Examinations were held in seventy-nine congregations and a total of 370 succeeded in saying the whole catechism with less than three mistakes. Of this number 123 were boys, and 247—just one more than twice as many—girls. Those who made no slip were marked with a star and numbered 161. Of these 75 were boys, and 83 girls. More boys should be encouraged to enter the lists, as so many in proportion to the total number succeeded in securing the significant star.

THE LAST WORD.

THE last word is the most dangerous of infernal machines. Husband and wife should no more fight to get it than they would struggle for the possession of a lighted bombshell. Married people should study each other's weak points, as skaters look out for the weak parts of the ice, to keep off them. Ladies who marry for love should remember that the union of angels with women has been forbidden since the flood. The wife is the sun of the social system. Unless she attracts, there is nothing to keep heavy bodies, like husbands, from flying into space. The wife, who should properly discharge her duties, must never have a soul above trifles. Don't trust too much to good temper when you get into an argument. Sugar is the substance most universally diffused through all natural products. Let married people take a hint from this production of nature.—Presbyterian Journal.

HOW TO TREAT CHILDREN.

FOUR good rules are given by Gertrude R. Lewis in the Interior:—

1. Do not promise punishment for a certain offence without giving it, if need be, and do not delay it, fear as well as hope deferred maketh the heart sick and the temper sour. Do not refer to it again, and never send a child hungry to bed for any offence. It is a crime against the child's health and welfare.

2. Do not "fib" if you don't want your child to do so. I saw a child punished on the second day of April for telling the "white lie" her elders had told the day before. Many a mother would be horrified at being thought untruthful who doesn't hesitate to tell a falsehood to get something away from a child or pacify it when papa leaves. Do you suppose the child does not soon see through your subterfuges?

3. Let the *num* and *num* in the household be strongly defined, and do not force generosity. Let exact justice come first, and insist only upon that, always giving the child due appreciation for all its little sacrifices. A very good rule of division was that adopted by two sisters. One divided and the other took her choice. You can rest assured there was never a candy more in one pile than the other, and much distress of mind was saved thereby.

4. If you want your little boy to cordially detest the little fellow next door, throw the latter's virtues at him on every occasion.

NOTES BY "PHILO."

LIBERALITY.

IT is gratifying to notice from the congregational reports weekly appearing that our people continue to contribute with commendable liberality to the support of the gospel. This one feature in our Church is a proof of the intelligence, as well as religious principle, of our people. There is no harder vice to conquer than the vice of covetousness—no current stronger at present than the current of worldliness. And there is a spirit also abroad of antagonism to the Church of Christ—antagonism to the ministers of the gospel. It speaks well, therefore, for our people that notwithstanding these influences, they are giving liberally of their means to the cause of God. And in most cases this money is given in a cheerful and kindly spirit. It is not given grudgingly. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and we rejoice to think there are many such in our Church. But there are also those who can give only a little, and some who cannot give anything at all. But these can, and often do, give what is as valuable as money. They give sympathy. They give their prayers, their goodwill, their cheerful service, so far as it is in their power.

WRONG KIND OF GIVING.

There is a kind of giving that is not very pleasant to the receiver. If, after inviting a neighbour to your house to dine, you said after dinner, "There, now, you have got a better dinner than you usually get, and I was under no obligation to give it to you, and I expect you to think a good deal of my liberality in providing you with it," you would not leave a very favourable impression on the mind of your neighbour. And yet in this spirit we sometimes give of our means to the Lord. We say, "There, now, I have given a dollar to the cause of missions, and I expect the Lord to be very grateful to me for it, and I expect the minister and the managers and every one in the Church to treat me with a great deal of consideration, because I have given this dollar to the Church." In fact, we often look at our giving as if we were conferring a favour on the Lord and His Church. Whereas that is not the Scriptural way of looking at it. My money is not mine any more than my time, my talents, my opportunities. All these are given me of my Lord to use for Him. They are His. I am but His steward. If He gives me an opportunity to serve Him with my money or any thing else I have, then I ought to be grateful to Him on that account. When the Church then puts before me or you any scheme requiring our support, it is our Lord setting before us an opportunity of doing something for the extension of His cause. When any one comes to see that his giving is the measure of his gratitude, is an act of grateful worship, a thankoffering, a service of love, and that it is done for the sake of Jesus Christ, not for minister or manager or Presbyterian Church, but for the cause of his Redeemer, then his giving will be cheerful and will bring blessing to his soul.

SPEAKING OF ONE'S OWN CHURCH.

IT is sometimes discouraging to hear our people speaking evil of their own Church. Not thinking, perhaps, of the harm they may thus do, not meaning to do wrong in so speaking, yet doing it. No one is thought better of for speaking ill of his parents. On the contrary, it would injure him in the estimation of every right thinking person. And it is almost equally wrong to hold up one's own Church to reprobation, to be constantly pointing out her faults, and bringing false charges against her. And yet this is a habit many indulge in. "Presbyterians are cold, and formal, and proud, and stiff, and ever so many other things," and some other people are so very much the reverse," they say. And one would think they feel sorry they were Presbyterians, and that they were doing the Church a favour by continuing in it. Now this is wrong and injurious. There is no Church whose members are perfect. And ours, in the character of its members for Christian intelligence, Christian benevolence and Christian activity, will compare favourably with any Church in the land. But not only is the charge not true, but even if it were so in some respects, it is never a good method of reforming any one to dwell on all his faults and defects, and leave out of consideration his good points. And constantly to dwell on the defects of our own people is neither of use to us nor to them. On the contrary, it has a very bad effect. It encourages the spirit of fault-finding. It discourages those who are trying to help on the cause. It is not a mark of piety in us. It has an injurious effect on one's own mind. Wherever there is a good, earnest, loving-hearted member of the Church, such a one will find those of kindred spirit willing to co-operate in every good work. And if our fellow-members do not come up to our standard, let us endeavour to lead them forward by our own adorning of the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not stand aloof from them in a spirit of fault-finding.

MAKING TOO MUCH OF MONEY.

Ministers speak at times as if the contributing of money were the chief part of the Christian's duty. 'Only give and you will have discharged your main obligation. So they seem to say. At all events, the people come away with that impression. And they are very quick to receive that impression. They think and speak as if his earnest advocacy of the claims of the gospel meant greed in him. This might be avoided, and the end sought might be reached, by insisting more on those principles and doctrines which underlie all work for Christ. Let the people feel that it is their spiritual welfare the minister seeks, and not their money; that he is zealous for the cause of God; that it is the love of Christ which constrains him in his advocacy, and then the springs of liberality will be more likely to be reached. Where there is spiritual intelligence and interest in the cause awakened, money will not be wanting. The power of Christ in the Church we all know is vastly more important than money, and more needed. When a Church looks to money as its strength and as its chief need, it has degenerated. When it puts money, in the form of salaries or endowments or augmentation, or in any other form, before the people always, and in every kind of agonizing appeal, as the one great need of the Church, it is apt to be misunderstood by the people. It is regarded as a gigantic money-collecting institution. If we had more of the Spirit of God among us, more zeal for the cause and glory of our Lord, more faith implanted in the hearts of the people, we would have all the money we needed. Constant begging, and foolish expenditure are checks to liberality.