

## Stepping Earthward.

(By Clara R. Bush, in S. S. 'Times'.)

A resounding thump, thump, thump, a pause, and another thump, thump, thump. My friend looked up from his book and frowned. His glance asked a question, and I answered it.

'Yes, that is Mr. Jones mending his fence. From this window I can see Master Horace oiling his little waggon for a nutting excursion he is to take with his friends to-morrow. I can also see Mrs. Jones just inside the dining-room window looking over a bag of winter gloves, or something small.'

I realize the sadness of the scene, but nevertheless I smile at my friend's bewilderment, as he asks, 'They're not the same Jones family who lived there last summer? I have often recalled that family with considerable satisfaction. I know they all came to church together, and sat in one of the front pews, and the little boy kept his eyes on me all the time I was preaching, just as my own little Horace used to when he was that age.'

'Yes,' said I, 'they are said to be the same Jones family. They look very much the same, but, as you say, that Jones family observed the Sabbath, and this Jones family do not. However, I happen to be able to tell you what caused the change, and probably you can use the story to point some moral in sermon or Sunday-school talk. Mrs. Jones herself was speaking to me not long ago, of this very same thing, and said she intended to resume the old ways as soon as she could start Mr. Jones.'

'The beginning was Horace's illness. He was very ill for three weeks, and they were too anxious and too busy to go to church. Of course, it would have been wrong to have gone when he might have been neglected in their absence. Then, when he recovered, the church was closed for two Sundays. Mrs. Jones says she felt particularly disappointed in being deprived of the services just then, as she wished to return thanks to God for the child's recovery in the church, where prayers were offered for him during his dangerous illness. By the time the minister returned,—you see five weeks had passed since they had attended church—the busy season in the store had begun, and Mr. Jones felt weary when Sunday came, and, having stayed at home five Sundays, he felt that it was really very much like work to dress and start off again promptly on Sunday morning. Mrs. Jones did not like to tease him to go, and she has an idea that she must stay at home whenever he is there. At first, she says, they tried to have the children go without them, but they would not; and so they all sat in the parlor together and studied the bible lesson, and Mr. Jones read a sermon from the weekly paper, and they enjoyed it all very much. Then the novelty wore off, and by degrees the lessons were given up, though they sat quietly and read some religious books. They told each other, Mrs. Jones says, that it was really more of a rest day, and seemed to them more like a holy day, than when they hurried away to morning Sunday-school and service, and then off again to second service. They thought that Mr. Jones was working hard all the week, and needed one quiet day at home. Mrs. Jones had her housework to do, and the weather was warm, and then she imagined that it was better for them all to stay together, and for one day at least to talk with one another. They imagined, too, that they studied the bible more closely at home, without the distraction of seeing friends and strangers.'

'After a while they read out of doors, under the trees, and then walked around the

grounds, and Mr. Jones would notice loose boards or dead branches, that needed attention during the week, but, being so busy, he would never think of these little repairs till Sunday came again. So then, with many mental excuses, he acquired the way of trimming the branch or replacing the board when they came to them. Then, as Mr. Jones became more interested in the Sunday tinkering, Mrs. Jones and Ida wandered off and left him and little Horace. When they went into the house Mrs. Jones would miss her husband, and wander through the rooms, and by degrees she became in the same manner engaged in attending to little things around the house that she could not find time for on weekdays. So, from step to step they went, till they have arrived where you find them this morning, deliberately and industriously working, without even a thought of the commandment they are breaking.'

'Yes, yes, I see,' said the good old minister, thoughtfully. 'It is like slipping down a mountain side. The only way to escape going to the bottom is to turn about with a quick, sharp dig of your heels into the first yielding ground. God is gentle and tender, but firm and decisive. He says, "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day." There is nothing easier than finding a good excuse for staying away from church. The only way for the Jones family ever in this world to go back to church is to go with a rush, as it were. Can't you go over, and bring them all to church with you to-night? If they start any excuse, and say they will go next Sunday, tell them "next Sunday never comes. They are breaking the commandment of God himself so long as they refuse to keep holy the Sabbath."'

That was the minister's message to the Jones family. Are you one of the family?

## Waiting.

(Ellen A. Lutz.)

Psalm xxvii., 14.

I left my burdens at his feet, and stood with empty hands;

Fain would I help the Master's cause, but lacked both gold and lands,

And though I had the will to work, no strength had I to guide

The plough of progress on its way along the mountain side.

My talent was so very small, I found no time or place,

Where such a feeble offering could do a work of grace;

The ranks were full of eager hearts, and hands outstretched in love,

To aid the weak, to cheer the faint, and point the way above.

Was there no little place for toil, when I so longed to be

A willing worker for my Lord, who wrought so much for me?

Seeking to know my appointed task, I found a precious word,

And now my heart finds perfect peace waiting upon the Lord.

—'Michigan Christian Advocate.'

God's own hand is pledged to guide me,  
God's own strength my strength shall be,  
Stronger are his angel legions

Than the devil and his crew;  
E'en though backed by strong temptations,  
Little harm can Satan do.

Confident such power will aid me,

And that Jesus holds me dear,

Can I feel a doubt of safety?

Can I tremble? Can I fear?

—From 'St. Patrick's Hymn.'

## Wm. Dunn's Conversion.

The following extract from the autobiography of William Dunn, who has now been for thirty-four years a gospel temperance lecturer, tells of his conversion. It is from the London 'Christian Herald':—I now began to feel the craving for drink, having been without any for four or five hours. I made an excuse to leave the temperance hotel. The mother of the little boy suggested that I should go with her son to the ship, where she said I should be welcome, and I should spend a happy evening. I consented, thinking that when I got outside, I could get rid of my young guide. Thanking the woman for her kindness, I left in company with my little friend. At the corner of Marsh street I stopped, and was about to let go of the boy's hand, when the little fellow said, 'Do not be afraid, sir; come along with me; they won't hurt you.' I consented to the boy's request, and arriving at a dingy-looking old hulk, and following the boy, I found myself inside a large ship, fitted up with seats. I was introduced to a man with spectacles on; he was very kind, and took my hat, and, leading me into the after part of the vessel, gave me one of the best seats. It was not long before the place was full of people. Oh, how I longed to get out, and tried to do so; but the man with the spectacles was so very kind to me, that I was compelled to stay against my will. I soon found that I had got into a place where there was preaching; for the ship referred to is the old Bethel ship. I cannot tell all I felt when the sermon was going on; but at its close my hat was given to me, and the man with the spectacles shook my hand and invited me to come again. This I promised to do, but did not mean it. When I got out of the ship I had a hearty laugh at my adventures, and off I started for the City Concert Hall and Vaults. When I appeared at the bar of the same, there were thirty or more men and women drinking; there was a general shout of laughter at my appearance. Thinking to keep up the fun I took out my pledge-card, and called for peppermint; they laughed the more at this order. I then showed my card to the barmaid; she showed it to others. There was any amount of ridicule, my employer saying I could not keep it half an hour. One of my companions took the card, and swearing at it was about to tear it up; but I prevented him by snatching it out of his hand. To keep friends with me, he offered me a drink out of his glass of rum-and-water—the drink I loved the most; I took the glass and put it to my lips, when I fancied I heard the voice of the woman who had been so kind to me, saying, 'Try, my good fellow, and God give you strength to keep it.' I put the glass down, saying I did not intend to keep the pledge when I came in, but I had now made up my mind not to drink again. They laughed at me, and, feeling disgusted, I opened the door and left them, some calling me back; but I ran till I came to my lodgings, and, locking the door of the room, I went to bed, but not to sleep. There is no sleep for one cursed with the love of drink as I was. Morning came, and with it still the awful craving for rum. As I did not go out as soon as usual, my landlady brought me up a cup of tea. I told her that I wanted to break off drinking, and that I was afraid to trust myself out.

Night came, and with it my duties at the City Concert Hall, where I knew I should be surrounded with drink. I went to business and sang my first song, and came off the stage into the hall, where one of my drinking companions, who knew I was trying to break off drinking, offered me his glass after I had refused to drink with several. I took the glass out of his hand and threw it