

This and That

TAKE TIME TO SERVE GOD.

It is said of a certain railway engineer that his duties call him at a very early hour—three o'clock in the morning. He is a Christian, and, knowing full well that soul-life must utterly perish without reading and study of the Bible and prayerful devotion, he rises at two o'clock in the morning. More than that—led of the Holy Spirit, without effort or affectation, he finds many an opportunity for pointing the wayward back to the cross, and sometimes of exhorting cold-hearted Christians upward to sunlit heights of holy living and heavenly happiness. He is a happy man. You may be so, too. Religion is not a cunningly devised fable. Our Redeemer is mighty to save, strong to deliver, limitless in love, longing to make you happy. Believe him now. Do like that early-rising engineer—take time to be religious. Read and study your Bible every day. Talk to God every hour in the day. Believe what he says. Do what he tells you to do. Get the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Join the forward movement for a million converts for Christ. Put at least ten names upon your prayer list. Lay them on the altar for God. Do not give up until they are converted.—F. W. Robertson.

BURNING BOOKS.

"How can you afford all these books?" I asked a young man calling upon a friend; "I can't even seem to find spare change for even the leading magazines."

"Oh, that library is only my 'one cigar a day,'" was the reply.

"What do you mean?" inquired the visitor.

"Mean? Just this: When you advised me to indulge in an occasional cigar, several years ago, I had been reading about a young fellow who bought books with money which others would have burned in cigars, and I thought I would try to do the same. You may remember that I said I should allow myself one cigar a day?"

"Yes, I recall the conversation, but don't quite see the connection."

"Well, I never smoked, but I put by the price of a five-cent cigar every day; and, as the money accumulated, I bought books—the very books you see."

"You don't mean to say that your books cost no more than that? Why, there is dollars' worth of them."

"Yes, I know there is. I had six years more of my apprenticeship to serve when you advised me 'to be a man.' I put by the money, which, at five cents a day, amounted to \$18.25 a year, or \$109.50 in six years. I keep those books by themselves as a result of my apprenticeship cigar money; and, if you'd done as I did, you would by this time have saved many more dollars than I have, and would have been better off in health and self-respect besides."—Facts.

WHY ART THOU SO FAR FROM HELPING ME?

Psalm xxii. 1.

A hundred times have I sent up aspirations to which the only answer has seemed to be the echo of my own voice, and I have cried out in the night of my despair, "Why art thou so far from helping me?" But I never thought that the seeming fairness was itself the nearness of God—that the very silence was an answer. It was a grand answer to the household of Bethany. They had asked not too much, but too little. They had asked only the life of Lazarus and a revelation of eternal life as well. There are some prayers which are followed by a divine silence because we are not yet ripe for all we have asked; there are others which are so followed because we are ripe for more. We do not always know the full strength of our own capacity; we have to be prepared for receiving greater blessings than we have ever dreamed of. We come to the door of the sepulchre and beg with tears the dead body of Jesus; we are answered by silence because we are to get something better—a living Lord.—George Matheson.

THE IRISHMAN'S WOODPILE

Were it not for the peat fields of Ireland the farmers and working classes would find it a difficult task to obtain fuel, as the working-man's small wages barely enable him to provide food for his family.

The actual yearly cost of fuel for an en-

tire household varies from five to twenty shillings. This, of course, does not include the cost of handling, but as the greater part of the work is done by women and children, the time spent in preparing the turf is not regarded as of much value.

In digging peat, the crust of the earth is first removed from a strip about three feet wide, after which the peat is taken out in chunks ten inches long and six inches thick. The spade used for this purpose is shaped somewhat like the letter L. The peat is spread out to dry, care being taken to put it on the most elevated places, where it remains until somewhat hardened by the sun and air. It is then built into little ricks, the pieces of sod standing on end, and so arranged that the air passes freely between them. In rainy seasons it is necessary to rebuild the little clamp many times in order to get the turf sufficiently dry to use.

The most laborious part of the work is getting the peat-out of the bog so that it can be reached by waggons and carted home, and as it is to be found only in the mountainous districts, in many cases it must be hauled several miles. The bogs are impassable for waggons, so the turf is put into a basket, which the natives call a creel, and is carried out to the roadside. When conditions permit, donkeys are employed, in which case two creels are used, one being hung on each side from another device, called a straddle, which is strapped to the donkey's back.

When the turf reaches its destination it is built into large stacks, wide at the base and gradually tapering to a point at the top, the outer sod overlapping, and somewhat resembling a shingled mansard roof. No farmhouse looks up-to-date without a large stack of turf in the back yard.—N. M. Haggerty.

NECESSITY OF PRACTICE.

Great pianists carry the dumb piano with them, which is simply a mechanical key-board for the exercising of the fingers. Rubinstein uses it, and on a recent occasion he said, "If I neglect to practice for a single day I notice it; and if for two days my friends notice it; and if for three days the people notice it." Some Christians leave off practicing their religion. First they notice it themselves; then their friends; then the world. Every Christian has his dumb piano on which to practice. True, it gives no sound that the world can hear, but it nevertheless accomplishes much; it is the instrument of silent prayer. M'Cheyne once expressed the belief that no one who prayed daily to God ever became a lost soul. It is well to recall this at times whenever the habit of silent prayer is neglected. Use the dumb piano.—Christian at work.

This issue of the Canadian Almanac, which forms the fifty-fifth of the series, is unusually valuable, and is indispensable to every office and library in the Dominion. Many of the lists given are not found elsewhere, and in no other volume can so much information be found in so small a space. The Canadian Almanac contains a full account of the Census of Canada so far as issued; giving the figures of the Population of all the Districts in the various Provinces of the Dominion, and also the principal Cities as compared with 1891. The Census of Great Britain is also published, giving the Population of the Counties of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and also the principal Cities and Towns. The other departments of The Canadian Almanac are revised and brought up to date. The Historical Diary has been continued and enlarged, and a vast amount of interesting and instructive information of various kinds will be found within the covers. The Almanac contains 416 pages, and the price in paper covers is 25 cents. Published by The Copp, Clark Company, Limited, Toronto.

God has promised that the reign of sorrow shall end. "God shall wipe away tears from off all faces." We may not stop our own weeping, but God can soothe us. Shall we not ask him to put an end to our woe; to cleanse away our sin and selfishness, to fill us with his own joy, and to make us spiritually good? God can accomplish this transformation. We have only to resign ourselves actively and trustfully to him to gain the sweet solace of the indwelling Comforter.—J. H. Petts, D. D.

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