

dissatisfaction; 'why can't everybody get about old enough to be strong and comfortable, say as old as I am, and stay that way? The flowers are as beautiful as flowers can be, why need they fade for other flowers to come? Why must the birds die, just to make room for other birds, and why need winters come after summers? I hate winters, and I hate death, and why must they be?'

'You wish to judge the ways of God, not to merely accept them. That is what all we humans are too fond of doing, whether great or small, wise or ignorant. But can you not put a why at the other end of the chain of events? Why is there life? Why are men born? Are you sure that anything dies, or only sure that it dies? When the summer drinks up the water in a pond, has it gone or only changed its place? The leaves and flowers fade, and fall, and perish, we say in the ground, but the earth is a great laboratory, where everything is renewed, and the leaf, dead and decayed, rises again into the light and air in the tissue of other leaves. Nothing is lost in God's economy; all serves its end, destined from the beginning in the thought of God. Man taken out of this world is but born into another world, where he exists forever, and in this world he does not perish in his influence; in his word, work, example, for good or evil, he lives on.'

'It seems as if more good could be done by living right than by getting out of the world,' said Rasmus.

'You feel so now; but the older you grow the less you will like the prospect of continuous living in this world. The worst punishment that fiction has been able to find for a sinner was to live on and on and on forever, as the Wandering Jew.'

'Who was he again?' demanded Rasmus.

'It's only a story—a legend, Rasmus,' said Rodney. 'It is said that when the Lord Jesus was going through the streets of Jerusalem to be crucified, He was very tired, and wished to rest on the door-step of a shop, and the shopkeeper standing in the door drove Him on.'

'Mean wretch!' cried Rasmus in indignation. 'If I'd been there, I'd knocked his head for him!'

'Well, a different punishment fell on him: that was, never to die till Christ comes back to the world.'

'That was much too good for him; it was giving him good luck for his badness,' said Rasmus, positively.

'Not as it turned out for him. He had to keep on travelling on and on and on all over the world.'

'That was nice, too,' said the tireless Rasmus. 'I'd like nothing better, so long as I knowed I had time for it, and wouldn't die in a hospital.'

'Perhaps this man did not think it so bad at first. But as time went on, he had more and more misery in it. All the people of his own family and day died. Age after age he wandered over the world, and saw the nations change, and he was still the miserable fugitive that nothing could kill. He could hope for nothing, fear nothing, care for nothing, only just travel still across the world.'

'Maybe it would get pretty lonesome after a time,' assented Rasmus.

'Suppose you know, that you had lived so long that you knew Robin was dead and forgotten, and you never could find him, and that Sally Crew was grown old and wrinkled and dead, and that Mr. Llewellyn had gone, and I had grown an old man and died, and that no matter how many you met, or liked, they would all get old and die, and leave you behind?'

'Yes; it would look sort of tedious,' admitted Rasmus; 'but I don't think people live half long enough.'

(To be continued.)

### A Bagster Bible Free.

Send three new subscriptions to the 'Northern Messenger' at forty cents each for one year, and receive a nice Bagster Bible, bound in black pebbled cloth with red edges, suitable for Sabbath or Day School.

Postage extra for Montreal and suburbs or foreign countries, except United States and its dependencies; also Great Britain and Ireland, Transvaal, Bermuda, Barbadoes, British Honduras, Ceylon, Gambia, Sarawak, Bahama Islands, and Zanzibar. No extra charge for postage in the countries named.

## The Holy Tree.

(By Julia Macnair Wright, in 'Forward'.)

Stopping one day to look at some long, beautiful bamboo poles, a Chinese student came and stood beside me.

'This cane,' said he, 'is the great gift of God to a large part of the world. Utensils, furniture, houses, fire, light, paper, sails, cordage, even food, are in this one plant.'

'The palm,' an Arab said to me, 'is the mother tree—all that we need for living for man and beast comes to us in the palm, the blessed tree.'

Once in Italy I entered a little olive orchard on a sunny slope. The owner was busy among his trees. Finally he turned to me and said:

'This is truly the tree of God. With a few acres of olives a man is rich. No part of this



OPERATING THE OLIVE MILL.

tree is wasted. See these roots—the olive roots grow very fast—we prune them. When a tree ceases to bear, we take all the roots from the ground. We grind the roots into a coarse red dust, like sawdust. It is rich with oil, and we press it into those round chocolate-colored cakes, called fumes; these are our fuel; they hold fire a long, long time; you can leave them on the hearth to smoulder all day, and we strike them into bright fire when you come in cold and damp. The trunk and branches of the olive, Signoria, are far too precious to burn. The wood is hard, fine-grained, beautiful in color, and serves to make the choicest cabinet work. The olive berries we pick and sort; the finest green ones are sold for the pickles. The fruit for oil is left on the tree until November to become purple as a mulberry and full of oil as a comb in the summer hive is full of honey. Come and see my olive mill. Look! this lower part is the stump of a very old and great olive tree. The stone turned by the crank is no stone, but another section of olive tree. Do you see how wide apart these are set? That is so the kernel will not be broken. Look! the olives are ready in these baskets. See these bags of woven rushes; the crushed olives are scraped into these and gently pressed; the first oil that flows is clearest, best and highest-priced. We rebreak the mass for a second pressing, and then for a third.

'Signoria, the tree bears fruit young, and bears for many years; the tree will live even a thousand years, and I saw one at Persico, twenty-five feet around the trunk. I call it a holy tree, Signoria, because it has pleased God to speak of it so often in his word. Does he not say that the Christian "is as a green olive tree in the house of his God?" The prophet saw two golden olive trees, pouring golden oil out of themselves, to feed the holy lamps, and John saw two witnesses for God, that were as two olive trees. Signoria, I tend my olives, and I think on these things.'

### A Rat With Brains.

While standing in a large woodshed, one end of which he had partitioned off with narrow slats as a fowl-house, Mr. X heard a gnawing noise, and looking about him saw a large brown rat darting away from a dog-biscuit lying on the floor of the shed. He decided to remain quiet and watch to see whether this thief of his dog-biscuit would

return. Presently he did, and slyly glancing at Mr. X as if to say, 'Now, you let me alone, and I'll let you alone,' his ratship began dragging the biscuit over toward the slat partition behind which were the fowls clucking and scratching. He reached the laths and tried to drag the biscuit through after him. It would not pass, being flat and broad. After some vain struggles with it, the rat vanished, to return with another of his acquaintance. The newcomer he stationed inside the fowl house. He himself came out and seized the biscuit by one corner. He then began tilting it upon its side, and the adroit friend poked his head through the slats and steadied it with him. In a few seconds the biscuit was held between them 'up and down' and between rat number one's pushing without and rat number two's pulling from within the barrier, the prize was forced triumphantly through the slats.—'Morning Star.'

## The Little Cottage in the Woods.

(By Katharine Smalley, in the 'Presbyterian Banner'.)

(Concluded.)

Darting in and out they succeeded in saving treasured books, pictures and valuables, and many lighter articles of furniture, carrying them to the garden that was on the windward side of the house. When the roof fell in and the heat grew fierce, so they dared not venture in the cottage any more, they carried the things still farther off; then they stood watching with helpless bewilderment the flames devouring their little home.

When the fire leaped wildly and lighted up the sky with its lurid glare, several men came running from neighboring homes, none of which were very near, yet close enough to be aroused by the unusual light. They could do nothing to save the house, but kept the fire from spreading into the woods. One of the men took the two women and Blanche to his home, where they were kindly cared for. Horace stayed to help and watch the articles saved from the flames. These, too, were taken in the morning to the neighbors and stored safely away and the homeless ones were made to feel welcome by their new friends.

They were all very tired that day and did not go to see the ruins of their little home, but the second day Mrs. Wayland and the children went over the fields a very sober little party. It had been a poor shelter, but it was their home and with it had gone all their hard summer's work. If only the dolls that she had intended to take away in a few days had been delivered they would have brought a good many dollars that would have been such a help now. Mrs. Wayland turned away from the ashes with a sob, and the tears she had been crowding back streamed down her cheeks. She tried to hide them from the children; Horace was already busy poking about in the ruins, but little Blanche saw the tears and threw her arms around her mother.

'Don't cry, mamma, don't cry; it will all come right. Grandma says it will.'

'Yes, dearie, I know,' sobbed her mother, 'but grandma worked so hard, and so did we all, and now nothing is left of it all. But I have my dear ones safe and I ought not to grieve so, I know,' and she held her little girl close. Then Horace's voice broke in on them:

'Oh, mamma, come quick. Here's something so funny. It looks like a cave under the hearth.'

A thought flashed through Mrs. Wayland's mind that made her run to the boy's side heedless of ashes and charcoal. With her help he was able to pry the stone away, so they could look in. It was a little vault and on the floor they could see a small iron box. With fast beating heart Mrs. Wayland tugged with Horace at the stone until they had an opening they could get down through and drag out the box to the light.

Her thoughts went back quickly to the forgotten days of long ago, and she remembered the little iron box that stood in her father's room and had bright beautiful things in it that he sometimes let her little sister and herself take a peep at. It was a wonderful sight that met their peering eyes when Mrs. Wayland, crouching in the ashes, opened the box. There was gold and silver, and from the jewel casket diamonds flashed back at the pair their