

she tended the sick and aged in the parish, and by-and-bye came the call to her noble life-work. In the year 1854 the great war between England and Russia broke out, and hearing of the terrible sufferings of our soldiers on the battlefield, she resolved to leave her beautiful home to go abroad and nurse them. It was a bold undertaking, fraught with great danger; but Florence Nightingale had consecrated herself to the good work, and so she bravely set out for the Crimea. I cannot tell you now, of all her patient, self-sacrificing labors for the wounded soldiers. She nursed them all through the war with true devotion; and when she returned to this country her heroic services were gratefully acknowledged by the people of England, from the Queen downwards.

'And, best of all, her sympathy and her tenderness in caring for the sick and suffering caused greater attention to be given to the work of nursing, which is now regarded, and rightly, as one of the most noble and honorable professions in which women can engage.

'Now, you know, Bertha, what first led me to do a little sick nursing for our own poor neighbors.' Here Aunt Ruth paused.

'Thank you, auntie, dear, for your true story,' said Bertha. 'I don't think I shall ever forget what you have told me about good, kind Florence Nightingale; — and there's mother knocking at the door!' — 'Children's Friend.'

What a Geography-Book Did.

It must be very pleasant to live in Japan. Shall I tell you why? Because the children are so well-behaved.

We know the Japanese children must have evil hearts and the same temptations to do wrong which English children have, but still we are told they are naturally more gentle, more obedient, and more easily controlled than the young folks of some other countries. And when we hear the accounts which missionaries give of them we sigh and say—

'How nice to be a teacher or superintendent in a Japanese Sunday-school, or to have a group of such children round us at our own fireside!'

But it is only of late years, as perhaps you know, that these little Japanese have heard about the 'Friend of little children.'

Hardly forty years since the name of Jesus was utterly unknown amongst them. The Empire of Japan dates back to a time hundreds of years before our English history begins, but all that long time the people were what is called Buddhists, and worshipped idols. Instead of the one true God, they had eight million idols! Their Emperor, too, they almost worshipped, calling him 'the Sun of Heaven,' and on their national flag depicted the sun rising out of space.

Once some Spanish Jesuits got a footing in the island, but were driven away; and this was the notice henceforward posted up in their streets:

'As long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan. If the King of Spain himself were to come, he should pay for it with his head.'

And so the notice remained for nearly three hundred years. The men and women and little children lived and died, and knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the heaven which might have been theirs through him.

By-and-by the Japanese woke up to the idea that they might perhaps improve themselves by intercourse with other nations, and by degrees they began to adopt European

ways and crave for European knowledge. And about this time there fell into the hands of a young Japanese a geography-book, which he began to study eagerly.

But he had not read far before he got sorely puzzled. This is what he read: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' A sentence from the bible, of course; but he knew nothing about the bible, and read it as a bit of geography.

'What does it mean?' he asked. 'Who is God?'

None of his friends could tell him, for nobody knew.

'I will go to America,' he said. 'It is an American book. They will surely tell me there!'

But it was not easy to go, for at that time nobody was permitted to leave the country without permission. At last he stole away by night, and in due time reached America. There he asked the same question, but, alas! the so-called Christians were engrossed in business or pleasure, and could give him little help.

God led him at length to a real Christian, who delighted to teach such an inquiring mind the truths of the gospel. The young Japanese received them into his heart and made them his own, and after ten years went back to his own country to tell to others the treasure which the geography-book had been the means of making known to him.

And now, if we were to walk through the streets of the Japanese cities, we should no more read the notice 'the sect called Christians is strictly prohibited in Japan,' but should find full liberty everywhere to teach, preach, or read the bible; and, moreover, could count 4,000 of 'the sect called Christians' in the Empire. And we should find, too, the dear little children of whom we have spoken, learning and singing with great delight 'Jesus loves me,' and 'There is a happy land,' only, as they would be in Japanese, we should only know our old favorites by the tune.—'Child's Companion.'

On Signing One's Name.

'Do tell the women,' begged a lady of great wealth, the other day, 'tell the women never to sign a paper the contents of which they do not fully understand. In the sorrow and excitement of a certain hour, I put my name to a document which put my money and affairs at the mercy of a money-changer for a dozen years. Had I only told him that I would think it over before signing, I should have had fewer sleepless nights and fewer grey hairs. Why did my father or my husband never tell me this?'

To think over a paper, or at least, to read it carefully before signing! This precept should be taught every girl and woman as the alphabet of business affairs. Many things may be safely left her to learn by experience, but not this. Too often it means her gentle acquiescence in a man's "Sign here," with a consequent adoption of other persons' obligations or the abrogation of her own perquisites and property.

A person's signature, standing before the law for one's self, is entitled to proper respect; and how to sign is scarcely less important than what not to sign. Everybody should adopt and cling to a certain style of autograph. Women should use their Christian names, never their husbands', and omit Mrs. or Miss as a prefix. A signature should never be left carelessly on pieces of blank paper where unscrupulous use might be made of it, and it should be distinctly legible.

A woman should learn also to respect the signature of those of even her nearest kin.

Messenger boys say that they are daily asked by ladies if they will sign their own or their husband's names on receipt-books. The New York 'Tribune,' recently portrayed a pretty bride with no practical knowledge of a cheque-book. The deliverer of a choice piece of bric-a-brac had insisted on payment at the door. The young woman explained that evening to her husband that as she had fortunately remembered how he had drawn a cheque the previous day, and where he had left his cheque-book, she made one out for the merchant, adding:

'You do not know how well Alonzo B. Tompkins looked in my writing!'

It is needless to add that no time was lost by the distracted young husband in recovering that most innocently forged cheque!—'The Youth's Companion.'

A Little Worker in a Colliery Village.

Not very long ago I went to a colliery village to speak for the Bible Society at the annual meeting. Just before the meeting commenced some of the collectors brought in their money. One little girl, not looking very strong, brought in fifteen shillings. Surprised at the amount, I said, 'Wherever did you get all this money?' She replied, 'I got a pin-card first and got that full.' 'Yes,' I remarked, 'I have that card here with sixty holes in it, and that, of course, means five shillings.' 'Then,' said my little visitor, 'I got another pin-card and I got that half-full.' 'Yes,' I replied, 'that is here, too.' But that only makes seven and sixpence, and you have fifteen shillings. I want to know how you got the other seven and sixpence.' 'Oh, I work for the Bible Society!' was the reply. 'Work!' I said; 'don't you go to school?' 'Yes, of course I go to school; but I find time to work as well.' 'Then,' I remarked, 'you get no fun.' 'Oh, yes, I do,' said my visitor, smiling, 'I get plenty of time for fun.' 'What do you work at, may I ask, and how do you do it?' 'I do knitting,' was the reply; 'I make mittens, and comforters, and mufflers for the colliers. They know I just buy the wool and put all there is over into the Bible box, and they keep me going all the year.' 'How old are you?' I asked. 'Eleven,' was the answer. 'And did you do anything for the Bible Society last year?' 'Yes, I got fourteen shillings last year.' 'I am sure,' I said, 'if our committee knew, they would be very grateful for the help of such a worker. And though our committee may not happen to know, your heavenly Father knows, and he will be pleased to see that you are doing all you can to let others know of his great love. May he bless you richly in the coming days!'—English Paper.

Taking Heed.

Did you ever watch people walking on icy sidewalks? Those who walk carefully, watching their steps and holding at the fence alongside, get safely over, but pretty soon a boy comes along who just knows he can walk along safely without any help, and thinks it foolish to be so careful about a little ice, and before he has time to think anything more down he goes. Did you ever try to be good without asking Jesus to help you? If you did, I'm sure you did not succeed. There are so many slippery places that unless we have his help we will surely fall. We are in greatest danger when we think we are safe.—'My Paper.'