

PROVERBS FROM CENTRAL AFRICA.

Some of our missionaries have collected a number of Central African proverbs. Many of them appear as old friends in a new dress, but most have a freshness of the soil about them. Others, again, are as prosy as—well, as proverbs ought not to be. A few of them are as follows:—

He that injures another injures himself.
He who forgives, is victor in the dispute.
We should not treat others with contempt.
An inmate that cannot be tamed (said of fire).
The sword does not know the head of the blacksmith (who made it).

A mischief maker will not do to tell secrets to.
If the whole assembly of the town convene, they find no sacrifice to make against sorrow.

Though many guests may be absent, it is the cheerful man we miss.

He who harasses one, teaches him strength.
The pig has wallowed in the mire, he is seeking a clean person to rub against (said of disgraced persons who wish to keep good company).

A strong man without economy is the father of laziness.

Help to the end is the help we must give to a lazy man.

A bribe puts the judge's eyes out, for a bribe never speaks the truth.

The thread follows the path of the needle.

A stubborn man gets into trouble, a pliable man is imposed on.

The vaulted tomb frightens old men.

A scorpion stings with his tail, a saucy servant with his eye.

He fled from the sword and hid in the scabbard.

"ONE AT A TIME."

One step at a time, and that well placed,
We reach the grandest height;
One stroke at a time, earth's hidden stores
Will slowly come to light;
One seed at a time, and the forest grows;
One drop at a time, and the river flows
Into the boundless sea.

One word at a time, and the greatest book
Is written and is read;
One stone at a time, a palace rears
Aloft its stately head;
One blow at a time, and the tree's cleft through,
And a city will stand where the forest grew
A few short years before.

One foe at a time, and he subdued,
And the conflict will be won;
One grain at a time and the sands of life
Will slowly all be run.
One minute, another, the hours fly;
One day at a time, and the hours speed by
Into eternity.

One grain of knowledge, and that well stored,
Another, and more on them;
And, as time rolls on, your mind will shine
With many a garnered gem.
Of thought and wisdom. And time will tell
"One thing at a time, and that done well,"
Is wisdom's proven rule.

THE VALUE OF DIFFICULTIES.

It has been said that the best way to commence life is to begin in one's shirt-sleeves; that is, to have to fight unaided against the difficulties which face everyone who is starting in life. Obstacles and failures have their value. They show us where our strength and weakness lie, and develop the qualities most necessary to secure success.

Sir Charles Napier, when campaigning under great hardships in India said, "these difficulties only make my feet go deeper into the ground." A late premier of England, though of noble birth, was poor in early life, and maintained himself by writing for the London newspapers. Had he never felt this exertion he might never have risen to eminence.

Necessity is not only the mother of invention; it is the best training-school for success. The laborer who overcomes human difficulties is not a curse to man; it is a spring of blessing.

SELF-HELP.

"Heaven helps those who help themselves," is a well-trying maxim, embodying in a small compass the results of vast human experience. The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigor and strength. Help from without is often enfeebling in its effects, but help from within invariably invigorates. Whatever is done for men or classes to a certain extent takes away the stimulus and necessity of doing for themselves; and where men are subject to overguidance and overgovernment, the inevitable tendency is to render them comparatively helpless. Even the best institutions can give a man no active help. Perhaps the most they can do is to leave him free to develop himself and improve his individual condition; but in all times men have been prone to believe that their happiness and well-being were to be secured by means of institutions rather than by their own conduct.

Daily experience shows that it is energetic individualism which produces the most powerful effects upon the life and action of others, and really constitutes the best practical education. Schools, academies, and colleges give but the merest beginnings of culture in comparison with it. Far more influential is the life-education daily given in our homes, in the streets, behind counters, in workshops, at the loom and the plow, in counting-houses and manufactories, and in the busy haunts of men. This is that finishing instruction, as members of society, which Schiller designated "the education of the human race," consisting in action, conduct, self-culture, self-control—all that tends to discipline a man truly, and fit him for the proper performance of the duties and business of life—a kind of education not to be learned from books or acquired by any amount of mere literary training. With his usual weight of words, Bacon observes that "studies teach not their own use; but there is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation," a remark that holds true of actual life, as well as of the cultivation of the intellect itself. For all experience serves to illustrate and enforce the lesson that a man perfects himself by work more than by reading—that it is life rather than literature, action rather than study, and character rather than biography, which tend perpetually to renovate mankind.

Great men of science, literature, and art—apostles of great thoughts and lords of the great heart—have belonged to no exclusive class or rank in life. They have come alike from colleges, workshops, and farm-houses—from the huts of poor men and the mansions of the rich. Some of God's greatest apostles have come from "the ranks." The poorest have sometimes taken the highest places, nor have difficulties, apparently the most insuperable, proved obstacles in their way. Those very difficulties, in many instances, would even seem to have been their best helpers, by evoking their powers of labor and endurance, and stimulating into life faculties which might otherwise have lain dormant. The instances of obstacles thus surmounted, and of triumphs thus achieved, are, indeed, so numerous as almost to justify the proverb that "with will one can do anything." Take for instance the remarkable fact that from the barber's shop came Jeremy Taylor, the most poetical of divines; Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning jenny and founder of the cotton manufacture; Lord Tenterden, one of the most distinguished of lord chief justices of England; and Turner, the greatest among landscape painters. The instances of men, in this and other countries, who, by dint of persevering application and energy, have raised themselves from the humblest ranks of industry to eminent positions of usefulness and influence in society, are indeed so numerous that they have long ceased to be regarded as exceptional.

SINS OF OMISSION.

Few men ever lived a life so busy and so devoted to God as Usher, Archbishop of Armagh. His learning, habits of business, station, friends, all contributed to keep his hands full every moment;

and then his was a soul that seemed continually to hear a voice saying: "Redeem the time, for the days are evil." Early, too, did he begin, for at ten years of age he was hopefully converted by a sermon preached on Rom. 12: 1, "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." He was a painstaking, laborious preacher of the Word for fifty-five years. Yet hear him on his death-bed! How he clings to Christ's righteousness alone, and sees in himself, even after such a life, only sin and want. The last words he was heard to utter were about one o'clock in the afternoon, and these were uttered in a loud voice—"Lord; in special forgive me my sins of omission."

It was omission, says his biographer, he begged forgiveness for with his most fervent last breath. He who was never known to waste an hour, but who employed the shred-ends of his life for his great Lord and Master. The very day he took his last sickness he rose up from writing one of his great works and went out to visit a sick woman, to whom he spoke so fitly and so fully that you would have taken him to have spoken with heaven before he came there. Yet this man was oppressed with a sense of his omissions.

Reader, what think you of yourself—your undone duties, your unimproved hours, times of prayer omitted, your shirking from unpleasant work and putting it on others, your being content to sit under your own vine and fig tree without using all efforts for the souls of others! O sins of omission! "Lord, in special forgive me my sins of omission!"

TAKE CARE.

1. Take care of your health. A sound mind depends largely on a sound and healthy body; and without good health you are not likely to have vigor, or cheerfulness, or courage for duty, or success in life. Do all in your power, then, to have and keep good health.

2. Take care of your time. It is one of the most precious of God's gifts. Misimproved, it is loss, injury, ruin; rightly used, it is success, character, influence, life to the intellect, life to the soul. Know, then, and constantly remember, the value of time. Seize and improve every moment as it passes. No idleness, no waste, no procrastination. Never put off to the future what may be done now. Count as lost the day in which you have made no improvement or done no good.

3. Take care as to your associates. Not only will you be known by the company you keep, but you will soon become like it. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Not only, then, shun the society of the idle, the profligate, the abandoned, the vicious, the Sabbath-breaker, the profane, the sneerer at sacred things, but seek the society of the wise and good.

CHRISTA'S SUFFERING.

BY MRS. EMMA HEWITT.

Mrs. Rosengarten sat beneath the shade of the great elm, darning stockings. Christabel, aged fourteen, lay at her feet upon a rug in a comfortable, if unladylike, position, doing what she was pleased to call reading; but, in reality, she was dreaming. Dreaming day-dreams! Beautiful visions she wove, and as her eye kindled and her cheeks flushed, and the breath came quick and fast between her half-parted lips, her mother smiled at the pretty picture made by the daughter of whom she was so fond, so proud. Her fond smile was half checked by a sigh of anxiety a moment later, for this same pretty, high spirited daughter had one or two faults that Mrs. Rosengarten had some little difficulty in coping with, and she could not help feeling anxious as to what life might hold for her child.

"What is it, Christa dear?" she asked presently.

"O mother!" exclaimed the girl, in a burst of enthusiasm. "O mother! I wish I might be one of them."

"One of what, dear? I am afraid you will have to explain a little or your stupid old mother will not understand," smiled Mrs. Rosengarten.

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