

arrangement of flowers, of which our first picture is an illustration.

The two latter accomplishments are far more difficult than they sound to our uninitiated ears. Often the only furniture in a room consists of a vase of flowers, the arrangement of which visitors are expected to admire; and oh, how the poor stems are cut and bent and twisted till they bend in exactly the right way! Then the making of ceremonial tea—the slow, precise movements, the handling of everything in a certain way, the prescribed lapse of forty minutes before the tea is ready to be offered to the honored guest. Such is a great part of a girl's education!

#### HER MARRIED LIFE.

At seventeen she is generally married by arrangement to an almost unknown bridegroom, and goes to live with her mother-in-law, whom she is bound to respect. She is, in fact, the servant of the house, and must be always ready to attend to the needs of her husband or his parents. You can see her in the large picture cooking their food, with a towel round her head to keep the dust from her elaborately-arranged hair.

As she in her turn becomes a mother-in-law she is honored as she herself had to honor when young. She seldom goes out, unless it be in the spring, to see the plum and cherry blossom, or in the autumn, to see the chrysanthemums or maple, or to take part in some heathen festival. This is the life of hundreds of middle-class women in Japan. The poorer classes often work in the rice-fields with the men and draw or carry heavy loads.

#### THE WOMEN MUST BE VISITED IN THEIR HOMES.

It is evident, therefore, that unless we go to the women they will not come to us. Women are always at home, men seldom. Once during a Mission we went from house to house with tickets, which the women, for the most part, gratefully received; but it was their husbands and sons who came to the meetings. For visiting effectually great tact and patience are needed—tact that we may know when we are not wanted and what to say when we see that our presence is acceptable, and patience to put up with the slowness and seeming hindrances we so often have to meet.

For my own part I have found that since they discovered my liking for Japanese food and have invited me to meals with them, or asked me, when visiting, to share their meals, I have got closer to them than ever before. It has done more to bridge over the difference of nationality than numbers of ordinary calls.

#### GOD'S MESSAGE THROUGH A MELON PLANT.

To quote a few instances. Some years ago I used frequently to visit a woman, the wife of a Christian man, but at that time not herself a Christian.

One day she told me the following incident:—'I have a melon plant in my garden which has been the message of God to my soul. This plant was quite barren; it bore no fruit. One day my husband said to me, "This plant is just like you. You bear no fruit to God." I was very unhappy, and felt that it was true. After a time a neighbor was altering his garden, and had nowhere to put a very big stone, so asked if we would have it in our garden. The stone was, by chance, put down on this poor plant, and I thought "Well, there is an end of it now." What was my surprise, when after a time I saw some fresh leaves, then a bud appeared, and so on till there were five buds, which ripened into five beautiful melons. I thought, God can do for me what He has done for that plant. The

very bruising of the roots seems to have quickened it into life, so perhaps God means to make my trials a blessing to me. I have five children, and they have been a great trouble to me; but I pray God to make them good and fruitful like the melons.'

After this we had many meetings in her house, and she and all her children were eventually baptized. They have gone to live in the North, but I have satisfactory accounts of them from time to time.

#### AN ENGINEER'S WIFE.

More recently a Christian teacher in one of our schools brought a friend to some of the weekly meetings for women, and asked me to go and visit her, which I did, with my Bible-woman. I have seldom met a more responsive woman or one who more eagerly imbibed what she was taught. She was peculiarly lonely. Her husband, being an engineer on board ship, only came home two or three times a year for a day or two at a time; so, to use her own words, though married for a year she had hardly become acquainted with him. By her own request her baptism was postponed from Christmas Day (1897) till a few weeks later, in order that 'her heart might be more at leisure,' as the New Year is always a busy time for the Japanese. Truly Christianity has made a different woman of her.

### Some Plain Words About Betting.

(By Robert E. Speer, in 'Forward.')

There are many boys and young men who think that betting is a bold and manly thing. They would not be gamblers for all the world, and they do not mean to do more than just bet a little 'in a friendly way.' Many of them have never stopped to enquire whether betting, even a little 'in a friendly way,' is wrong or not. If they would stop to enquire, what would they find?

First of all, that betting is very foolish. A man who, in college, had lost so much money in betting that for one whole month he lived on crackers and water, until he could get some more money, told me once that he had stopped gambling, because he had found out that in the end the man who betted was sure to lose. He might win for a while; but sooner or later, it cost him so dearly that it paid to stop. Because betting is so foolish, the poor amateurs who gamble in stocks in Wall Street are called 'lambs.' They are fleeced and devoured by professional wolves.

But that is a matter of policy. Betting is wrong as a matter of principle. The better who loses is making a wrong and immoral use of his money. Money is life. The price of blood is coined in the metal and woven in the paper. No man has a right to throw such life away. Losing it in a bet is waste. It is giving it away for no useful purpose.

If it is unmanly to spend money in betting, it is yet more wrong and immoral to gain money in this way. As Phillips Brooks says in his sermon on 'The Choice Young Man': 'In social life, in club, in college, on the street, the willingness of young men to give or to receive money on the mere turn of chance is a token of the decay of manliness and self-respect which is more alarming than almost anything else. It has an inherent baseness about it which, not to feel, shows a base soul. To carry in your pocket money which has become yours through no use of your manly powers, which has ceased to be another man's by no willing acceptance on his part of its

equivalent, that is a degrading thing. Will it not burn the purse in which you hold it? Will it not blight the luxury for which you spend it? Will you dare to buy the gift of true love with it? Will you offer it in charity? Will you pay it out for the support of your innocent children? Will it not be a Judas's treasure, which you must not put into the treasury, because it is the price of blood?'

Of course, some men say that they do not bet for money. 'We do not care for the money.' Why then do they bet for money? Why not bet their money against buttons or marbles? That would show clearly that they did not bet for the money that might be won. Why do they bet, if not for money? 'Oh,' some say, 'I bet for the excitement.' But think how much more exciting it would be to bet dollars against buttons. Then if you won, you would only win buttons, but if you lost you would lose everything. This would greatly increase the excitement. No, it is not for the excitement men bet. It is for the money, in the hope of getting something in exchange for nothing. In that immoral and unmanly hope they will risk getting nothing in exchange for something.

But men try to justify their willingness to take or to lose money in this way by saying: 'We bet not money for the sake of money itself, but for the sake of showing where our sympathies are, and in order to back our college, or our team, or our political party.' That is not true. Men bet for money. Most bets are made in the hope of winning money. Many men bet against their own sympathies, because they think the other side is going to win. And even when it is true, what a squalid and pitiable way this is to show sympathy and to give support!

Gambling is wrong for the loser and wrong for the winner. The principle which usually underlies it is snobbery and conceit, for it rests on the assumption that the man who bets knows more, or that his opinion is better, than that of the man with whom he bets. If he does know more, then surely he is acting in a contemptible way in taking advantage of a more ignorant man to make money out of his ignorance. To say that the ignorant man is willing, or that he will not believe that he is ignorant, does not make matters better. It only makes more contemptible the conduct of the man, who, instead of protecting ignorance, takes a sharper's advantage of it.

Betting for little things is not right when betting for large things is wrong. Principles are principles. It does not matter through which end of a telescope you view them. What is wrong in the large is wrong in the small. Besides it is mean and ungentlemanly not to give gloves or candy or presents to those to whom you want to give them, instead of trying by a bet to get something for yourself, while at the same time appearing to be generous by offering to give if you lose.

Look at the effect of betting on the men who bet. See its result in the 'sporting man,' a man whose tastes have been so corroded that he no longer knows even how to dress as a gentleman. Betting fosters lies and deception and bluff. It leads men to use dishonest means to influence the result of the issue involved. It prostitutes life, killing its freshness and spontaneity. It warps and destroys the calm, just judgement and starts men on a road which runs always down and never upward. Have nothing whatever to do with it.

### The Find-the-Place Almanac.

#### TEXTS IN GENESIS.

- Jan. 7., Sun.—I will bless thee and thou shall be a blessing.  
 Jan. 8., Mon.—Is anything too hard for the Lord?  
 Jan. 9., Tues.—God will provide.  
 Jan. 10., Wed.—The Lord led me.  
 Jan. 11., Thurs.—Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to Thee.  
 Jan. 12., Fri.—Mizpah.  
 Jan. 13., Sat.—I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.