

The Village Church Bell.

An ancient stone church, to which ivy is clinging,
Has stood in the village for many a year,
A bell in its spire has been faithfully swinging,
And giving forth notes that are mellow and clear.
Though marks of decay o'er the gray walls are stealing,
And none who now live of their building can tell,
Yet clear as of old are the notes that come pealing
In melody sweet from the village church bell.

Along through the years, oh! how oft its vibrations—
Its soft, pleasing tones on the calm, Sabbath air—
Have given to worshippers free invitations
To hasten at once to the service of prayer!
The ages of those who have learned from its tolling,
Who in our fond memories only can dwell;
Glad news of a wedding has often come rolling
In sweet notes of joy from the village church bell.

The patient old bell, when its cadence is dying
Sends forth from the spire a low, tremulous hum,
Then heard are the echoes from distance replying,
As if the sweet sounds should ne'er silent become.
And then when the echoes have ceased their repeating
The memories of days that we all loved so well,
Of days that were joyous but ever too fleeting
Are brought to our minds by the village church bell.

Summer Church-Going.

BY MRS. M. E. SANGSTER.

Away from home and our own particular sanctuary there is apt to be a little letting down the bars of habit. We take to ourselves a degree of freedom, and perhaps by a certain train of reasoning, not far removed from sophistry, convince our minds that we can worship God as well in our rooms, or on a veranda with our books, as by attendance at church. With inclination to fortify argument, one may bring herself to believe almost anything.

Yet the obligation to spend the Sabbath strictly, as conscience and custom dictate is not remitted by absence from the town and church where we are known to everybody. There our example would not tell upon others as it does in a strange place, among people unfamiliar, and possibly willing by following in our steps to excuse themselves from a lapse which they cannot justify. One quiet Christian family setting the fashion in a rural resort may lead a crowd of summer pleasure seekers to attend the local churches on the Sabbath and the mid-week meeting as well, so influential for the right are object lessons.

A lady who opened her charming mountain home to summer boarders was very much impressed by the fact that while applicants wrote to her inquiring about the table, the rooms, the shade, the chances for fishing and driving and other amusements, the water in the well, the freedom from malaria and everything that had to do with their physical comfort, no one asked about church privileges. It was significant to her—the thought of the comparatively small part this special advantage for spiritual growth played in the eyes of persons temporarily leaving home.

Wearied as some of us are by the pressure of work in the Sunday school and church during nine months of the year the wish for a vacation is natural and reasonable. But one may drop the responsibilities which burden at home without also surrendering the right to privileges. In the country church one is often divinely fed. Some of the most thoughtful, richly suggestive sermons I have ever heard I have listened to in country pulpits, and they live in memory still marked as red letter days, those Sabbaths of the soul, when the message from above came to me through the lips of messengers whose names were unknown to me as they spoke. The finest of the wheat, this is what God gives people when they carry their religion, to use a common phrase, wherever they go.

We need to remind ourselves that in this period of luxurious and æsthetic living one must not always and everywhere be comfortable. One may have stairs to climb to an audience-room, cold in winter and hot in summer, yet be repaid by a feast worth going for, an eloquent and scholarly preaching, in a spirituality which elevates and inspires. Soon after the war a little band of God's people in West Virginia found themselves worshipping in a primitive school-house, with rough planks, backless, for seats, the green turf under their feet, and chinks in walls and roof letting in

air and sky. "Never" wrote my friend, "have I been nearer to God, than in that dear, rude little church; never heard finer congregational praise, nor more fervent prayer, nor better preaching."

Wherever we are, is not the duty for us to let our light shine? Shall we not do as we would at home, when home is behind us and our tent pitched temporarily by the beach or among the hills? And as for our mental attitude and our spoken criticism, shall we not try to hold in abeyance in both speech and thought that which is censorious, and try to find only that which we approve and can admire?

Candid reflection will make it apparent to most of us that our most profitable summer Sabbaths have not been those of desultory reading or of sitting under a tree with our books, or of lounging in our rooms, but those when, putting temptation to self-indulgence firmly aside, we have worshipped God among his people, and paid him the tribute of our presence in his holy temple.—*The Congregationalist*.

Travel and Camp Life.

What every one ought to seek in an outing is change of scene and change of sensations. Body and mind wear out in a rut. The hardest boulder, caught in a pot-hole of the brook, at last is ground to nothing.

The recreations of our people consist for the most part in travel and camping out. The first presents a panorama to the eye, the second a change of employment to the mind. Each has its zealous advocates and its enthusiastic defenders. But he who becomes for the hour tourist or gypsy will derive from his recreation, profit just in proportion to his previous experience or study. It is the genius or the scholar who gets the most from his outing. The man whose soul is not thrilled by the sight of the Forum Romanum naturally sets his pulses bounding by the use of absinthe; and the camper-out who knows nothing of the story told in stone or flower, nothing of the life of bird or bee, fills up with whiskey. The student of history or science finds in new faces or new facts stimulus enough.

The rush to Europe each year is due not simply to the natural charms of historic ground, but to the fact that it is cheaper to travel across the sea than across the continent. Two of the loveliest spots in the world are Banff, in British Columbia, and Manitou in Colorado. Bright skies, crystal waters and lofty heights, combine to give enchantment to the scenes. But the traveller who pays his dollar for his ham and eggs reflects mournfully upon past breakfasts of Swiss honey and snowy rolls for a quarter. At the foot of our Rockies he glories in the thought that it is higher than the Alps, but he is discreetly silent about the fact that his bills are as steep as the mountain. The depths of the Fraser Canyon make him realize his littleness—and the nothingness of his pocket-book.

The Rockies, especially their northern ranges, are bound to be the great camping grounds of the future. The further one goes into mountain ranges on either side of the C.P.R. or north of the North Pacific the more the country fills up with lakes; these gems of crystal waters are resplendent, and are among the most beautiful lakes that ever mirrored a mountain in its breast; but the chain of lakes that is threaded by the Canadian Pacific, between Banff and Vancouver, is a revelation of nature's charms such as few have as yet realized.

We do not appreciate, as we should, the possession of the Word of God, and might well be put to shame by the simple devotion of many who show their devotion in unmistakable ways. Dr. Egerton Young tells of a Christian Cree Indian in the great North-West who had gone with his son fishing 140 miles from home. Upon his return they found that the Bible, which they had with them on their fishing expedition, and which they supposed they had brought back in their pack, had been left with an uncle. Putting on his snow-shoes in the morning, the father started back to the lake, and in four days had returned, walking the 280 miles in four days in order to secure the Bible which he loved as being the "book of heaven." Would that the whole Church loved God's Word as devotedly and cherished it as carefully.