

God's Guiding Hand.

If we believe in Providence—that there is a Hand moving amid all life's affairs, so directing and adjusting them that for each one who loves God good is continually wrought out—we find comfort in the thought that when we fall it is our Father who suffers us not to succeed; that it is He who sets up and bars the gate in the path we sought so eagerly to enter. We may certainly believe this of hindrances which are invincible—inevitableness is clearly God's will for us. We may believe, also, that the true blessing is, then, in the not having, rather than, as we supposed, in the having.

Some flowers have poison mingled in their cup of fragrance; to pluck the flower would be to breathe death. The place we tried so hard to win, and which we imagined would have been ideal in its honor and opportunity, would have proved a nest of thorns, with complications and perplexities that would have made our life miserable. The money we hoped to have made would have brought more luxury and ease to us, but we would have lost something of our spiritual earnestness if we had got it. With too many people the growth of worldly possessions is balanced by a corresponding loss of heavenly longings.

Life is oftentimes long enough to allow good men in later years to thank God for what in earlier years they wept over as grievous disappointments and irreparable losses. The ploughshare seems to work hopeless destruction as it cuts its way across the field. But it is not long before it is seen that what seemed ruin is indeed a process in the renewal of life and beauty. By and by a golden harvest waves on the field.

We have found a great secret of peace when we have learned to see the hand of God in the withholding of what we sought and in the taking away of our cherished joys, as well as in the giving of favors. Job said that it was the Lord that took away his property and children, and in this belief he rested and sang. We are sure that nothing can be lost in God's hands. When he takes our joys and treasures from us they are safe in his keeping.

"God keeps a niche in heaven to hold our idols; and albeit He brake them to our faces and denied That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them, raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty—" and that after awhile he will give them back to us in a way in which we can keep them forever.—Rev. Dr. J. K. Miller.

A Wise Answer.

A bright young man of wealth and social position, but with bad habits, recently asked a young woman to be his wife. Many girls would have felt flattered and have accepted him. Her answer was sharp and decided. "You say I have qualities you wish in the woman who is to be your wife. I do not know as to that. But there are habits I do not have, and I cannot accept a husband who has them. I do not smoke, nor swear, nor indulge in wine. I am not in debt. I do not spend my days in idleness nor walking the streets with silly, unthinking girls, nor my nights with questionable associates. As you have most of these habits, I am not willing to become your wife. Nothing but misery could come of such a union." It was wisely thought and bravely spoken.—California Independent.

A day of rest gives new strength for work. God provides the day and if we are wise we will make the most of it.

A Good Temperance Society.

Two boys stopped in front of a saloon, and an old man standing near listened to what they said.

"Let's go in and take a drink," said one of them.

"I—I don't think we'd better," said his companion, "my father's terribly opposed to saloons. I don't know what he'd say if he knew I'd been in one, and drank liquor there."

"Just for the fun of the thing," urged his friend; "of course we'd stop with one drink. There couldn't be any harm in that."

"My boys," said the old man, coming up to them, "you don't know what you're talking about. If you go in there and take one drink, you're not sure of stopping there. The chances are that you won't, for I tell you—and I know what I'm talking about by a bitter experience—there's a fascination about liquor that it takes a strong will to resist after the first taste of it, sometimes. Take the first drink, and the way of the drunkard is open before you. Only those who let liquor entirely alone are safe. I know, for I've been a drunkard a good many years. I expect to be one till I die. I began by taking a drink just as you propose to—for fun—but I didn't stop there, you see. Take the advice of a poor old wreck—and that is, never take the first drink."

"You're right," said the boy who had proposed to visit the saloon. "I thank you for your good advice, sir. I say, Tom, let's promise each other never to take the first drink."

"All right," said Tom, and the boys clasped hands on their pledge.

"That's a good temperance society to belong to," said the old man. "I wish I'd joined one like it when I was a boy."

To Explore the Antarctic Ocean.

The British Government has proposed to contribute £45,000 (about \$225,000) toward the expense of an exploring expedition to the Antarctic. This makes it highly probable that the expedition will be a naval one, and, accompanied by an ice-breaking steamer, like the Russian *Ermack*, which cut her way through ice (at places twenty-five feet thick) in the Baltic last winter, as has been suggested, a very high latitude might be reached. The cost of a special vessel equipped for ice-breaking work would be high, hence a large fund would be required to provide for its construction. The British navy has done nothing in polar exploration for the last twenty-five years, and if the Admiralty should now conclude to take the matter in hand much good work would probably be accomplished in the Antarctic.

The Antarctic conditions are more favorable than when Weddell, in 1823, reached 74 degrees 15 minutes south latitude, and had ar open sea before him. Sir John Ross followed Weddell's line twenty years later and encountered great difficulties, but the *Jason* found open sea behind the ice pack, near Weddell's course, in 1893-94.—New York Tribune.

Snap-Shot of a Drink That Killed Two Men.

"The most remarkable snap-shot picture in the world is owned by a friend of mine in a town in Georgia," said an enthusiastic amateur photographer. "Its story is extremely curious. It seems that he went one day to a blacksmith shop to get a shot at the men at the forge. The smith was engaged on a difficult piece of iron work and had two helpers. Just behind them, on a shelf, was a

pint flask full of yellowish white liquor, evidently the corn whiskey for which the native Georgian has a peculiar liking. As my friend was preparing to take his picture, one of the helpers caught sight of the bottle and communicated his discovery by dumb show to his companion. The smith's back was turned at the moment, and the first man reached stealthily for the prize, while my friend, unnoticed in the corner, quickly aimed his camera. It was a comical scene, and in his mind he had already named the photo "The Stolen Drink." The helper uncorked the flask and took a swift gulp, and his companion snatched it and did likewise. Then for a brief, breathless instant they looked at each other, and as they did so their grin gave way to such a stare of questioning horror as I never saw before upon a human face. I know, because it was then that the camera clicked and the picture is as clear as crystal. The flask contained carbolio acid. Within an hour both men were dead. When my friend took one print he broke the negative, so as to make the photograph absolutely unique. It shows the forward end of the shop. In the foreground is the anvil, with the smith bending over his work. Behind him are the two helpers, one still holding the flask, looking at each other. You can see tragedy in their eyes as plain as print. It is a frightful and dramatic tableau that could not be duplicated by any sort of art."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Unbelief.

There is no unbelief.

Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,
Trusts in God.

Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,
"Be patient, heart, light breaketh by-and-by,"
Trusts the Most High.

Whoever sees 'neath winter's field of snow
The silent harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows "God will keep."
—Charles C. Jennings.

The Birds' Foster Children.

It is a singular freak of nature, this instinct that prompts one bird to lay its eggs in the nests of others, and thus shirk the responsibilities of raising its own young. The cow-buntings always resort to this cunning trick, and when one reflects upon their numbers it is strange that these little tragedies are quite frequent? In Europe the parallel case is that of the cuckoo, and occasionally our own cuckoo imposes upon a robin or a thrush in the same manner. The cow-bunting seems to have no conscience about the matter, and so far as I have observed, invariably selects the nest of a bird smaller than itself. Its egg is usually the first to hatch; its young over-reaches all the rest when food is brought; it grows with great rapidity, spreads and fills the nest, and the starved and crowded occupants soon perish, when the parent bird removes their dead bodies, giving its whole energy and care to the foster-child. The warblers and smaller fly-catchers are generally the sufferers, though I sometimes see the slate-colored snow-bird unconsciously duped in like manner; and the other day in a tall tree in the woods I discovered the back-throated, green-backed warbler devoting itself to this dusky, over-grown foundling.—John Burroughs.