

PLUCK AND PRAYER.

There wa'n't any use o' fretting,
An' I told Obadiah so,
For of we couldn't hold on to things,
We'd just got to let 'em go.
There were lots of folks that'd suffer
Along with the rest of us,
An' it didn't seem to be worth our while
To make such a dreffle fuss.

To be sure, the barn was 'most empty,
An' corn an' pertaters sca'ce,
An' not much of anything plenty an' cheap
But water—an' applo-sass.
But then—as I told Obadiah—
It wa'n't any use to groan,
For flesh an' blood couldn't stan' it: an' he
Was nothing but skin an' bone.

But, laws! of you'd only heard him,
At any hour of the night,
A-prayin' out of that closet there
I would have set you crazy, quite.
I patched the knees of those trousers
With cloth that was noways thin,
But it seemed as of the pieces wore out
As fast as I set 'em in.

To me he said mighty little
Of the thorny way we trod,
But at least a dozen times a day
He talked it over with God.
Down on his knees in that closet
The most of his time was passed;
For Obadiah knew how to pray
Much better than how to fast.

But I am that way contrary
That of things don't go just right,
I feel like rollin' my sleeves up high
An' gittin' ready to fight.
An' the giants I slew that winter
I ain't goin' to talk about;
An' I didn't even complain to God,
Though I think that he found it out.

With the point of a cambric needle
I druv the wolf from the door,
For I know that we needn't starve to death
Or be lazy because we were poor.
An' Obadiah, he wondered,
An' kept me patchin' his knees,
An' thought it strange how the meal held on
An' stranger we didn't freeze.

But I said to myself in whispers,
"God knows where his gift descends,
An' 'tisn't always that faith gits down
As far as the finger-ends."
An' I wouldn't have no one reckon
My Obadiah a shirk,
For some, you know, have the gift to pray,
An' others the gift to work.

JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

NATURE AND GRACE.

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearso, in his recent Christmas sermon in the West London pulpit, related this incident:

"When I was a student, our grand old professor of theology was a man for whom we had a great veneration—simple, child-like, holy; none had ever known him to be anything else, and that gracious and un-failing sweetness and beauty were to us his natural disposition. To such a man it was no trouble to be always blameless. But one day it chanced that a student came in late to his class, and pushed his way to his seat. The professor stopped to ask gently why he was late. The answer was given somewhat flippantly, an excuse which aggravated the offence. Instantly the professor, who had been sitting, rose up to his full height, until the big, massive man seemed to fill the room, stretching out a trembling and terrible forefinger at the offender. The great shaggy eyebrows were lifted, and the lightnings shot from his eyes. Like thunder rolled these words from his lips, 'Leave the room, sir!' He started in amazement, almost in fright. The culprit crouched away from his place, and left, while that majestic figure stood there all ablaze with wrath. The door was shut. Then again the professor sat in his chair. But the storm was done. With a trembling voice he read the discourse, seeming almost unable to go on. After the lecture we left, only to gather in groups and discuss this wonderful thing. Presently came a message that the offender was wanted; and he hastened to the irate professor, expecting an angry reprimand. But there sat the old man in tears.

"My brother," he sobbed, "will you forgive me?"
"No, sir, indeed, it is I who should apologize," said the student, overwheld.
"No, no, I am older. Will you forgive

me? I am very, very sorry. Say that you forgive me—"

"The student managed to get out a word or two.

"And you must tell all the students that I have apologized, will you?"

"And again there was a pause for the promise.

"Now," said the noble old man, "I will go and ask God to forgive me."

"Nothing in all that life, nothing in all his words, ever did us so much good as that. We knew then under that gentleness and beauty what fires burned; and every man of us had a new faith and a new hope and a new love."

IN SIX HUNDREDWEIGHT OF CHAINS.

A few weeks ago a Mohammedan fakir came to Bombay who had voluntarily loaded himself with twenty-four *mannds* (six hundredweight) of chains. We visited him at that convenient free rest-house for native travellers, the Falkland Road Dharamsala. He was reclining on his mat and hard pillow, and was dependent upon an attendant for food. The bulk and weight of the chains, welded round his neck, arms, and legs, rendered walking impossible. It was said that when he travelled by train (he came from North India) he was charged partly as a passenger and partly as freight. He desired to go as a pilgrim to Mecca, and an ordinary ticket by steamship was purchased for him, but when he arrived at the ship the astonished officer declined his company.

Some large iron pegs and a heavy iron mallet were attached to his chains. These were used in fixing him firmly down, at his desire, in any particular spot.

This iron bondage was no new one. For twenty-four years he had submitted to it. What caused him to voluntarily endure a burden of chains which, if inflicted by any official authority as a punishment, would bring down upon the government that permitted it the execration of mankind?

He said it was his inclination to evil. As a young man he was very wicked, and he caused chains to be fastened upon him to keep him from sin. As time went on he added more chains until the present weight was reached.

The man's face was not a dishonest one. The manner of his conversion was also open. There is no reason to doubt that for twenty-four years he had been engaged in a desperate struggle with sinful inclinations. But his admission that as time passed by he added more chains was a confession of defeat.

This Mohammedan fakir in his ignorance had been dealing with the effect instead of the cause. Better than chaining the limbs is to seek a change of heart. The psalmist understood this when he cried: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Create? Yes; that is the word; and no hand but God's can do it. The same truth appears in the words of Jesus Christ to Nicodemus: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'—*Bombay Guardian*.

A YOUNG EVANGELIST.

BY ELIZABETH GORDON.

The shortest sermon I ever heard was preached by the shortest preacher I ever saw; and it was not on Sunday, or in a church, but on Monday, in a small steamer plying between Toronto and the Island.

Ever since the boat left Church street wharf, I had been amused by hearing a clear, high-set voice asking questions one after another, as fast as the little tongue could go, every question begun, carried on, and ended on the same high note. I could not hear the answers; for the lady in charge of the voice answered in low tones which did not reach my ear, though I sat near.

"It will learn to modulate in time," I thought. "She is teaching it not to speak so loud by her low, soft answers." I had to say 'it' in my thoughts; for though every one in that half of the boat could hear the voice, only those on the other side of the lady to whom it was talking saw the face. Nothing could be seen from our point of view but a great hat of fine brown straw, which covered it like a tent,

underneath which an edge of white skirts showed, and from it peeped a pair of tiny slippers.

Some of the questions asked by the voice were so original that I thought I would move around and see what was to be seen on the other side of the big hat; so I sat down on the other side of the lady, and looked on one of the loveliest child faces I had ever seen. But, oh, such a delicate-looking mite! features perfect, eyes of softest hazel, and rings of silky brown hair curling all round the blue-veined forehead.

I was wondering how long the fragile little body would stand the wear and tear of that voice, when the boat touched at Wiman Batlis, and a big policeman came on board and walked towards a vacant seat beside the child. The little one looked around, then turned to the lady and put a little hand in hers.

"You need not be afraid of the policeman, darling. You are a good boy. It is only bad boys who are afraid of policemen."

"Oh!" said the child, with a bright smile. And when the big policeman sat down beside him, he turned up the beautiful face to him, and asked:

"Are you a policeman?"

"Yes," answered the man, looking down at him kindly.

"Why are you a policeman?" was the next question.

The policeman gave a puzzled laugh, but did not seem to have an answer ready. So the child helped him by asking:

"Is it 'cause you like to be a policeman?"

"Yes," said the man. Then, as if afraid of any more questions, he took out the key of the patrol-box, and a pair of handcuffs, and began to explain that they were to put on bad boys when he took them away.

"You won't take me away," said the little fellow bravely, looking him straight in the face. "I am a good boy."

"No, my boy, I won't take you. Whom do you belong to?" asked the big man, still smiling at the mite.

"I belong to Jesus," said the child.

The big policeman got very red in the face, and, rising hurriedly, jumped on the wharf at Island Park.

So you see, that the sermon was only four words. Could any of you preach it?—*Sunday School Times*.

WHAT EIGHT BOYS DID.

Last summer, eight boys, with a taste for natural history and some training in that line, made a very profitable and enjoyable use of a part of their vacation.

These boys, who were high school students, took a walking and collecting trip. In twelve days they travelled 160 miles, and came home with a new stock of health, and a big load of collections. It was a very cheap trip, too, the total expenses being \$9 for each member of the party.

The expedition left home one morning about the middle of June. One of the boys supplied a strong horse, which was attached to a grocer's delivery waggon. A vehicle was needed for their camp equipment and their collections. They had a complete camping outfit except a tent, which they had not been able to borrow; so they made up their minds that they would give farmers a chance to offer them the hospitality of their barns. The idea worked well, and every night they slept on the hay in one or another of the capacious barns that came in their way. Their waggon carried food supplies for two weeks.

Each boy had a valise and a roll of blankets. Then there were botany cans, a collecting press and driers, geological hammers, a camera, and all the other apparatus the boys needed for such a tour. Before they left home they agreed upon their daily routine. They were to have cooked meals morning and night and a cold snack at noon. Four boys each day attended to the culinary department, two serving as cooks and the other two serving the meals. The next day the other half of the party took their turn at the cooking pot. Usually the commissary detail rode in the waggon while the others were busy with beetles, bugs, plants, and minerals.

The boys studied the various geological formations. Some of the most interesting places visited were some slate quarries and mines, which are so rich in the beautiful crimson and green ores of zinc, and other places where the young students were

greatly interested in the finely exposed rock formations. Many specimens of everything that interested them were obtained and when they came home they enriched the cabinet of the high school and had many things left to label and store away in their private collections as souvenirs of a very sensible and pleasant vacation jaunt.

The example of the eight boys may well be emulated by students in many places who have a fondness for nature and a taste for collecting specimens.—*Education Record*.

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